

# What is the Recipe for Success at work? – Employee Perceptions from a Finnish Tele- com Company



KKAS3013, Master's Thesis

Salla Karima

skarima@ulapland.fi

0309578

Faculty of Education, Educational Sciences

University of Lapland

Satu Uusiautti

2016

1 INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.1 Identifying pre-requisites and obstacles for success.....	8
1.2 Nokia and its High-Potential and International Graduate -Programs as focus group.....	9
1.3 Shaping working-life.....	12
1.4 Positivity as a motivation for growth and development.....	13
2 SUCCESS AT WORK .....	16
2.1 Work competence .....	21
2.2 Work motivation .....	23
2.3 Positive engagement at work .....	25
3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS .....	27
4. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SETTING.....	28
4.1 Qualitative research .....	28
4.2 Multimethod case study .....	31
4.2.1 Phase I - empathy-based method.....	32
4.2.2 Phase II - Qualitative Themed Interviews .....	33
4.3 Participant selection and data collection .....	33
4.3.1 Phase I – empathy-based data collection .....	34
4.3.2 Phase II Interview data collection.....	40
4.4 Data analyses .....	42
4.4.1 Phase I – empathy-based data analysis .....	48
4.4.2 Phase II - Interview analyses .....	48
4.5 Reliability and validity of this study.....	49
4.6 Ethicality of this study.....	52
5 RESULTS.....	53
5.1 Willingness to learn and being curious.....	55
5.2 Importance of co-operation and networking .....	59
5.3 Being brave and stepping out from comfort zone.....	61
5.4 Positive attitude and passion to do things .....	63
5.5 Conducting your own development and being proactive.....	66
5.6 Understanding the operational environment and the big picture .....	69

5.7 Being open-minded for change .....	71
5.8 Competence and leadership development.....	72
6 SUMMARY OF RESULTS .....	75
7 CONCLUSIONS .....	79
References .....	85
Appendices.....	89
Annex 1A .....	89
Annex 1B .....	90
Annex 2.....	91
Annex 3.....	92
Annex 4.....	95
Annex 5.....	97

## **University of Lapland, Faculty of Education**

The title of the pro gradu thesis: What is the Recipe of Success at Work? – Employee Perceptions from a Finnish Telecom Company

Author(s): Salla Karima

Degree programme / subject: Science of Education

The type of the work: pro gradu thesis ☒ laudatur thesis \_\_\_\_

Number of pages: 88 + 9

Year: 2016

### **Summary:**

Success at work as a phenomenon provides an attractive perspective to observe working life. Success as a concept itself has a positive echo and as it is a subjective experience, it can be associated with different things, such as feelings, results, competences and achievements. Today's global business environment, characterized by rapid changes and uncertainty, brings new requirements to individuals and organizations to understand different factors behind the success. These factors are relevant and meaningful for a company's competitiveness and employee's engagement. Companies share an interest to recruit top talents in a global marketplace and therefore it is important to understand how employees are experiencing work success.

The aim of this study was to find out what it requires to be capable to succeed at work. In addition to this main target, the purpose of this study was to understand what might be the possible obstacles and personal factors hindering employee's success. This study was a case study and concentrated on employees who have been selected in the High Potential and International Graduate Trainee –programs in Nokia. These employees represented talents in a particular organization in Nokia.

This study was constructed by using a qualitative multimethod approach. The data was collected in two phases. In the first phase, participants (N=15) wrote written frame stories where method of empathy-based stories (EMBS) was utilized. In the second data collection phase, semi-structured theme interviews (SSI) for selected employees (N=6) were conducted. Data was analyzed by utilizing theory-driven content analysis. Parts of the theoretical concepts, such as work success and work motivation, were brought as such to the study from earlier studies and theories.

Work success appeared as a multidimensional phenomenon where both, the employee and the workplace has a role. Success at work was transpired as a subjective work experience forming in a certain context. Results indicated that talented employees shared a similar view and reality on how work success was experienced. Employees perceived the possibility where success factors were possible to occur. Positive attitudes and engagement factors such as willingness to learn, resilience, being curious and open-minded and stepping out of a comfort zone were seen as prerequisites for success. Having the ability to lead own development and learning were seen essential, and the importance of communication skills were especially highlighted.

Study indirectly revealed that lack of motivation might be the major obstacle preventing success. Motivation was seen as a fundamental as well as a prerequisite for any learning to take place. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to understand factors connected to positive work engagement. This study strengthened the understanding that engaged employees are proactive and motivated to continuously look for new challenges.

Keywords: success at work, positive engagement, positive psychology, work motivation, multimethod case study

Further information:

I give permission the pro gradu thesis to be read in the Library X

I give permission the pro gradu thesis to be read in the Provincial Library of Lapland (only those concerning Lapland) X

## 1 INTRODUCTION

*"Successful people never ask if things will work. They are willing to try and find out."*

The quote above, created by Internet Marketer and entrepreneur Brad Gosse, fascinates me and brings me about to study what success at work really is and how talented employees describe their success. For me, the quote embodies a message that success at work is not so much based on technical knowledge and skills, although they are important, but more on person's ability to work effectively with others, influence others and feel good.

What is success at work? What are the elements linked with success? It feels that there is a certain power behind the success. What is that power; is it something to do with persistence or is it something magical? Is it something we all can have? These are the questions for which I aim to familiarize myself in this study.

I started my research journey at Google. I admit this is a habit for me when wanting to find an answer quickly for something. When "googling" the word *work success*, you can get hundreds of different results for what success is first one said *"Success is liking yourself, liking what you do, and liking how you do it."* (Angelou Maya), next one pointed out that *"Success isn't about how much money you make, it's about the difference you make in people's lives."* (Michelle Obama) and the last one I chose had a focus on courage *"Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts"* (Winston Churchill).

The mentioned Google findings indicate that success and work success can be defined in many different ways. Work success can mean completing an objective or reaching a goal on time. On the other hand, success can be seen as a dominant state of having each area of our life balanced. The definition depends on from whom you ask and in which context, so success can be seen as a subjective experience and feeling. As a conclusion, it can be said that depending on the underlying values, success as an abstract concept has different definitions. This leads to a question whether it is possible to study success scientifically.

Work success can be reviewed from an individual, group, organization, society, country or global perspective. If we look at it from a welfare state perspective and assume that people are succeeding when they are feeling good and their work-life is balanced, we can find several benefits for example on society level, why it is important to understand these underlying factors.

According to World Health Organization (2014), a healthy workforce is a prerequisite for sustainable development and social wellbeing. The World Health Organization (2014) defines mental health as “*mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.*” According to Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (2016), in addition to many positive aspects to personnel itself, personnel’s well-being effects positively on the company’s competitiveness, financial results and its reputation. Therefore, when having a holistic view on both work success and well-being, there can be found several important factors both on individual, society and global level which give good reasoning’s why it is important to understand and study work success.

## **1.1 Identifying pre-requisites and obstacles for success**

The aim of this study is to research what are the prerequisites of and development leading to success at work and on the other hand, what are the obstacles and personal factors hindering an employee's success at work. This study concentrates on employees who have been successful in their performance and represent the talents in a particular organization. The idea for this study came from my experiences of reading related studies in the same field and from my personal interest to understand how employees are perceiving work success and what kind of thoughts they have on this topic in general.

I work in a global Telecom Company called Nokia, which has gone through big changes, mergers, acquisitions and re-organizations especially in the last ten years. I work in the area of competence development and communications and my role is to ensure that employees in a certain organization have the needed opportunities and possibilities to develop their skills and competences. Nokia is currently having a quite new combined approach on how everyone's performance, talent, development and learning are being managed, as well as how individuals are being recognized for their performance. This approach consists of four broad focus areas integrating some of Nokia's key people processes: "Goals & outcomes", "Learning & development", "Reward & recognition" and "Dialog & feedback". Nokia's main goal is to encourage an environment for continuous quality interactions, contributed by the quarterly discussions and feedback sessions between line managers and employees. Approach is forward looking, focusing on development planning and recommendations for all employees, rather than backward looking, focusing only on performance and results. Nokia has built new ways and solutions to contribute employees' development and one of the Nokia's value is renewal, which is about continuously developing oneself, learning and sharing best practices with the colleagues. Everyone is responsible for his or her own development and creating of his or her own learning



path. Ideology behind this approach is very much in line with the guidelines of positive psychology. Positive psychology studies human's strengths and capability to pull through different challenges in life. It concentrates on the positive rather than the negative. When employees are given assignments which challenge them to grow, develop their strengths and demand a high variety of skills, they are more likely to be successful. (Garcea, Harrington, Linley 2013, 323 & 329.)

## **1.2 Nokia and its High-Potential and International Graduate -Programs as focus group**

To be capable to understand the context of this study, it is necessary to introduce the company in question. Nokia is 150 year old company, which as of today, employs over 106 000 people in more than 120 countries. Nokia is a global leader in the technologies that connect people and things. Nokia develops and delivers software, hardware and services for any type of network to help communication service providers, governments, and large enterprises deliver on the promise of 3G, 4G, 5G, the Cloud and the Internet of Things.

This study focused on especially one function in Nokia called Global Operations. Global Operations is responsible for supporting Nokia's Customer Operations in the customer demand creation and fulfillment, and provisioning of internal and external manufacturing services. Global Operations has 4168 employees in 75 countries and it has had High-Potential program (HiPo) and has International Graduate Program (IGTP) to support development of talented employees. From this amount, 108 employees were still in HiPo -program which started in 2014 and 95 of them were invited to participate in this study. Nokia has recognized these 95 employees as talents and employees recruited via IGTP (9) have gone through tight selection process. These two groups were in focus in this study as both group's employees represent talented employees among Nokia in Global Operations function.

**High-Potential Program** is a program, which first helped to identify the talents who were seen as high performers and potentials in the organization. Individuals, who were recognized as having the best performance and potential to grow, were selected to the program. High performers were not automatically HiPo's. Selection was done in co-operation with human resources and line managers. Line managers needed to differentiate better their high performers by potential. Performance was determined by the employee's results and behavior during a particular review period. Potential was determined by an employee's aspirations, engagement, learning, and agility to grow and succeed in new or more demanding positions. Instructions to identify a talent was shared by human resources and it was instructed for example to carefully explore the "aspiration" as it was mentioned that someone can have a potential but may have no aspiration to grow outside the current role, position or geographic location. It was also highlighted that aspiration can be time-related and should be re-tested regularly. One of the criteria's to HiPo's were good learning abilities which meant that HiPo needs to have the ability to learn how to deal effectively with new situations or changing conditions. The program contained development investments to HiPo's, which were for example leadership related programs and learning solutions. Program also targeted to develop the co-operation and networking among the HiPo's.

As mentioned in the introduction, Nokia is now having a new combined approach on how everyone's performance and talent, development and learning are being managed. With this new approach, every employee is considered as a talent. Before this renewal happened in May 2015, Nokia used to have described HiPo approach in place. New people focus approach is now in use and there is no separate talent program in place such as HiPo.

**International Graduate Trainee Program** is a two-year program, which is targeted at Business, or Information Technology graduates who have outstanding graduate-level degree (Masters/Master of Business Administration/diploma). One of the most

important criteria is to have technical background with interest in management topics, or the other way around. In addition, traineeship experiences are highly valued as well as strong English skills both in written and spoken English. From personal characteristics side, pro-activeness and teamwork focused working style are seen as advantages. Openness to global movement and long-term international career opportunities, and ability to achieve results in diverse team settings are all valued. This program is targeted for candidates around the age of 25-29. These young professionals have been employed first in 18 months training program which intensively supports their fast growth in the Nokia and after the program would be ready to manage Managerial-level assignments. Program started on 2014 and for this study three out from nine people were randomly selected.

Program has four (4) different phases. In the first one the employee starts his or her first assignments at own home location and after three months, takes part in joint assignments in Germany to get to know the company better, and network with other program members. After this, work continues again at own home location focusing on a specific project. Again after six (6) months, the employee moves abroad for six months to do a specific project or own activity depending on the role and the targets. During the remaining six (6) months, the employee concentrates on assignments back in home team and prepares for next steps. In this program, the employee is supported by a dedicated leadership team sponsor who is a senior manager in the respective organization, local mentors who are the managers in the respective teams and locations, and the buddy who is helping employee get integrated into the Nokia family, trainee community & line manager.

### 1.3 Shaping working-life

When having a look at open position advertisements in LinkedIn, which is the world's largest professional networking tool, I noted that many workplaces are searching persons who are ready and willing to meet different challenges and ready to update their competences actively based on needs. Companies from different industries are looking for employees who own good co-operation skills, are capable to work alone but also as part of a team and are ready to work in rapidly changing environment. (LinkedIn 2016.) Dependent from the industry, many fields are currently getting themselves familiar with Internet of things, big data, analytics, automatization and digitalization, which will bring new elements to work. This will change the nature of work, and lead to a situation where most probably some of the existing jobs will disappear and new positions will appear. This means that in the future there might be needs for certain skills which we do not know of as yet. Recently, for example, big data has brought new competence requirements such as capability to collect, save and analyze massive amount of data in an efficient and useful way. Increase of technology is another reality in the workplaces and O'Neil (2014, viiii) points out that this results in an increase in cognitive complexity. Employees become responsible for multidimensional tasks under a tight time pressure. This sets several competence requirements and abilities, both to individuals but also to organizations. Organizations needs to understand these requirements and have capabilities to define and asses those.

When following generic discussion related to work life requirements and capability to develop personal competences, it can be said that lifelong learning and continuous self-development together with self-reliance capabilities are strongly part of today's work life. Resilience is the ability to cope with life's challenges and to adapt to adversity, and it reflects a positive outlook on work and shapes learning for the future rather than complaining about the past (Warren, 2013, 318-320). Learning can no

longer be divided into a place and time. Instead, learning can be seen as something that takes place on an ongoing basis from our daily interactions with others and with the world around us. Ideology behind the lifelong learning supports strongly the vision of human growing, developing and learning new things throughout life. Viitala (2005, 135) says that lifelong learning refers to all kind of learning's which changing work life and changing environments affects. The concept of lifelong learning has become of vital importance with the increase of new technologies that change how we receive and gather information, collaborate with others, and communicate.

In addition, it is important to notice that not only the type of work but employment relationships have been changed. Long-term employment is no longer the norm as much of today's workforce does part-time job, has contingent employment and multiple careers. Increased need for overtime and faltering boundaries between work and leisure time are topics discussed actively in today's life. (Turner, Barling & Zacharatos 2002, 716.) In addition, many of the changes in today's workforce stem from generational diversity. Twenge and Campbell (2013, 25-28) points out that growing up in the 1990s, for example, was a fundamentally different experience than growing up in the 1950s. There are certain broad forces, which are included by each of the generations, and this naturally leads to a situation where different generations have different values and expectations of working life. From an organisational point of view, it is essential to understand how working life is changing and what kind of characteristics different generations are bringing into it in order to be capable to react, influence and support employees example via people processes.

#### **1.4 Positivity as a motivation for growth and development**

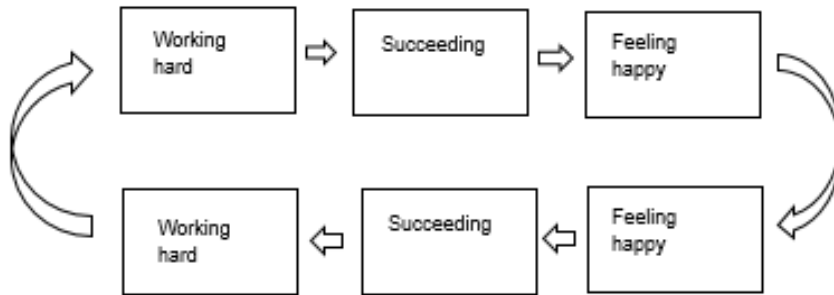
Roots of positive psychology reach to the 1950s when psychologists noticed a major problem in the field of psychology. In the earlier years, psychological study had focused for several years on understanding and clarifying what was wrong with people.

For the next several decades, researchers wanted to understand better the most natural thoughts, feelings and behaviors of successful people, having in mind that maybe those could provide a new perspective to psychology. (Hodges & Asplund, 213.) Hodges and Asplund (2013, 213) refer to studies where different research teams discovered that when a person leverages his unique and natural gifts, he is able to create increasing opportunities of excellence. This was the starter for strengths based philosophy of using talents as the basis for consistency. This could be seen as one of the important elements positive psychology has brought to working life.

I am inspired by different elements provided by positive psychology as it focuses on subjective experiences contributing to a good life, positive individual traits, and institutions that enable both. Positive psychology can be seen as the scientific study of what makes life worth living, the empirical exploration of how people flourish (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Instead of having a look on negative things or diseases, such as stress, bore out or burnout in working life, positive psychology focuses on personal growth and a more positive view of the human condition. Positive psychology in working life was one of the major themes in European Association of Work and Organizational (EAWOP) congress on May 2015. Especially work engagement was one of the topics introduced in the congress. Work engagement consists of three different dimensions, which are separated from each other but closely linked to each other. These elements are gumption, dedication and absorption. (Seppälä 2014, 224.) I truly believe a positive perspective can bring encouraging elements to working life in Finland, as well as globally. Therefore, also in this research, working life is studied from work success perspective, which is seen by default in positive way. I hope that this study can release energy and provide new drive for individuals and organizations to gain growth and development for their future actions.

Work success is a wide concept and closely linked with working life as a whole. Behavioral science research in psychology and economics suggests that non-cognitive factors, for example soft skills such as motivation, work ethic, teamwork, organization, cultural awareness, and effective communication, play a role that is as important or even more important in determining success at school and in the workplace. (Kyllönen 2013, 22.) Inspiration and baseline for this study has been Satu Uusiautti's (2008) dissertation related to work success in which work success was contemplated as multi-dimensional and positive phenomena. I chose to have the same perspective in this study as it is encouraging and comforting and I enjoy and tend to look at things in a positive way. Uusiautti (2008, 2013 & 2015) has studied success widely, and based on her recent study done for one of the Finnish banks Pohjolan Osuuspankki in Rovaniemi, success as a terminology got a two-level definition. First, success is seen as a result and second, as a process. (Uusiautti 2015, 127.)

Uusiautti (2015, 22) has cited Frey, Johans and Gertemayer (2013) who have said that positive psychology has a special role in workplace and organizational related research targeting to create optimal working conditions. On its best, work can become an important part of your personal well-being. (Uusiautti 2015, 22.) What is very interesting are the thoughts presented both by Achor (2013) and Uusiautti & Määttä (2013). Usually people tend to think that success follows after working hard and at the end, there lies happiness. Achor (2013, xv) puts this the other way around and challenges us further to think that happiness could be seen as an enabler for success. Uusiautti & Määttä (2013, 8) adds to this model also the well-being in addition to happiness.



**Figure 1** Working, success and happiness as a recurrent cycle

When talking about success, Achor (2013, 10) uses a fascinating term as positive geniuses'. These positive geniuses see the negative reality and things but have the ability to do something to change those. Achor (2013, 10) also emphasizes the importance of combining our different intelligences, such as IQ, emotional and social intelligences. Therefore, he defines that *"success is not just about how much intelligence you have; it's about how much intelligence you believe you can use."* (Achor 2013, 11.) This definition opens up Achor's main idea of positive geniuses.

## 2 SUCCESS AT WORK

Nature of working life is changing (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 1 & Barensen & Gardner 2013, 301). Frese (2009, 397-402) states that working life has undergone tremendous changes in the last 100 years and provides examples of how job and career concepts are continuously changing. In today's world, we can see clear reduction of jobs in the traditional production and service industries. Technological innovations and increasing number of temporary and project type of work have brought



new elements to the working life, and many companies have changed their job concepts. Changes and different requirements in working life promote employees to develop their skills and knowledge constantly, and Frese (2009, 402) even states that an employee has to be “quite interested to develop his or her skills”.

International and national competitive situations as well as new services, products and technologies challenge existing information, skills, behaviors and attitudes (Hätönen 2000, 9). Fastened change rhythm at work naturally fastens further learning requirements (Viitala 2005, 135). Employees who are ready to develop themselves constantly and update their knowledge, have a strong market value in job markets (Hätönen 2000, 8-9). Manka (2007, 47) highlights the importance of well-being at work, which has direct effect on work productivity and she states that essential part of the companies capability to be competitive is to ensure personnel competence and motivation.

It can be stated that future's success is built with the skills and competences the companies' personnel has. In today's world, international business is complex both because of increasing technology solutions and the difficulties of doing business around the world. While world and different environments around us are changing, companies need to react and assimilate with the changes constantly. For example during the 21<sup>st</sup> century, social media has brought new ways to communicate and network in work environment also. Basics of digital communication, social networking and understanding the meaning of digital identity are competences which we need to be aware of as an individual and organization; knowing how to maintain and support to develop them. Therefore, competence development in organizations plays a vital role having all these changes linked with its learning strategy, which is aligned with Nokia's strategy. By doing this, it is ensured that Nokia is concentrating to develop the right areas, and secures opportunity for renewal. It is crucial especially for management to understand the different factors influencing competences and further to work success, so that right decisions are made when providing development opportunities to personnel.

According to Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (2016), learning at is related to organizations culture and employees understanding of themselves and understanding of future's employee. Organization's top management and its leadership needs to be engaged to competence development, although every employee is responsible for taking ownership of own development and updating own development plans (Viitala 2005, 23). For employees, occupational learning means a better and deeper understanding of their work and its object. Learning also involves active performing, the process which helps the employee to use the new understanding to solve tasks and situations that occur at work. (Finnish Institute of Occupational Health 2015.)

Companies and employees want to succeed, and to be capable of success they need skillful and motivated personnel. Success at work can be described and defined in many different ways and it comprises of different sectors. Uusiautti and Määttä (2015, 17) ask, who can define success when success at work is subjective. In her dissertation Uusiautti (2008) studied both, reasons behind success by focusing on motivation and drive as well as process of becoming a top worker. She found out that success at work was described as a combination of several elements. These elements included working conditions and environment, a successful combination of work and other areas of life, and an employee's individual characteristics. Furthermore, the research found out that success should be seen as on-going process which can be enhanced by many factors in different phases of life. (Uusiautti 2008, 103 – 109.) Explaining reasons for success, Uusiautti (2008, 106) came to a conclusion that work and how you experienced your work affected mainly on success. (Figure 2).



**Figure 2** Success elements and relationships between them (Uusiautti 2015, 133)

Uusiautti (2013, 2) has discussed success as a form of positive human development, and she points out that success can be considered from many points of view. She notes that people naturally strive for success. Uusiautti and Määttä (2015) together have approached success at work holistically by analyzing work success also from the perspective of childhood and adulthood, taking into account for example impacts of relationships. Uusiautti and Määttä (2015) admit that usually work success is personified into individuals who are very career-oriented and sacrifice personal life for work. They state that work success can be described through top know-how, competences and success. What is important to notice is, that work success is seen as a process, not as a status-quo. (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 1-3.)

It is also relevant to note that work success happens always in a certain context as behavior depends on its context and its outcome (Uusiautti 2013, 5). Therefore work success can be seen as a mixture of different dimensions. Research results indicated that the way how work and working itself is being experienced, were central

elements explaining work success. Employee's motivation, life situation, personality, competence and characteristics of work affected how work was experienced, and how it was linked to success at work. (Uusiautti 2008, 103–106.) One of the essential factor was employees work competence. Uusiautti (2008, 106) mentioned that for an employee who does not have the required knowledge and skills, it is challenging to experience know-how and work-control feelings.

Uusiautti and Määttä (2015, 50-51) say that common characteristics for employees who succeed at work are positive attitude and optimism. These employees also tend to develop themselves and learn new things actively. Top workers gave much value to co-operation, and they appreciated when they could affect the content of their work. They experienced that their work was rewarding and meaningful. Top workers were capable to regulate their duties in a way that they did not feel tired at work. Top workers were able to concentrate on the core elements in their work which helped them not to stress too much. What was also common for top workers, was their way to cope with challenges and obstacles in their work. Challenging situations were seen as momentum to develop and top workers did not give up. They were emphasizing that in stress situations it is important to strive forward and accept the situation. (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 29–33, 50.) Top workers experiences reveal that positive experiences where significant factors for success at work and well-being at work. Well-being at work were valued more than salary. (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 34.) Most of the top workers appreciated good atmosphere, and therefore it is important to observe work success also from the perspective of work community (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 51).

Uusiautti's (2008) study indicated that parents' behavior and attitudes toward work had a positive effect on work but not so much on career choices. Parents' attitudes towards work and towards other persons are learned from home. Parents were not pressurizing but gave their support when needed related to career planning. (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 59–60.) During childhood, one learns elements, which are

seen helping to assist further work success in later life. During adulthood especially social relationships, hobbies and leadership have effect on work success. (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 87–88.)

The findings above reveal that work success can be seen holistically as an on-going process which is affected by different elements. Uusiautti and Määttä (2015, 127) are emphasizing the holistic nature of success thinking and state that successful development does not mean only success at work, as success can be looked at in a holistic way taking into account for example love and happiness.

## **2.1 Work competence**

Competence or competency can be defined in many different ways but all the definitions have in a way the understanding of competence being a cluster containing different elements such as abilities, commitments, knowledge and skills. Competence may be defined as a condition of quality of effectiveness, ability, sufficiency, or success (Elliot & Dweck 2005, 5). Kanfer and Ackerman (2005, 336) notice that the process of defining competence in the workplace requires consideration of two issues. Firstly, competence in the workplace typically refers to *“the potential for, or demonstration of, coordinated actions that accomplish organizationally valued tasks”*. Secondly, competence is not synonymous with performance. Therefore, Kanfer and Ackerman (2005, 337) consider the following components to be a part of competence: abilities, knowledge and skills, motivation, personality, and self-concept. Uusiautti and Määttä (2015, 12) also remind that performance is often confused with competence, behavior or action. It is important to understand the difference between them. Performance is the result of behavior and action and something, which is measurable. (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 12.)

Lee (2010) has studied the competences of high-performances and his number of studies have proposed various competency models. Purpose of these models is to guide organizations to amplify their employees' competencies. Such a competency model usually contains a list of required competencies. All required competencies, however, do not necessarily share the same importance. According to Lee (2010, 422) high-performers play decisive roles in organizations. His paper emphasizes that it is important to explore high-performers' required competencies that extend above and beyond the core competencies. (Lee 2010, 438.)

Adler (1982) has described eight elements of competence. According to Adler (1982, 34-38) each competence has applicability from the perspective of individuals and from the perspective of social systems of various degrees of complexity (e.g., families, organizations, and entire communities). These eight elements are:

1. Performance of major social roles;
2. Self-concept;
3. Interactional functioning;
4. capability to control different feelings
5. capability to transfer from development stage to another
6. capability to survive from stressful situations
7. capability to gain certain resources which one may need at certain point of life
8. cognitive skills

Motivation is affected by personal interest and general motivational tendencies. Performance lays the foundation for a learning mechanism that is connected to features that increase competence. (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 13.) Work competence is described in a model which shows distal factors as cognitive abilities and personality, work role demands as work-related knowledge, work-related skills and actual work/task goals and organizational objectives as job performance containing technical performance and contextual performance (Kanfer & Ackerman 2005, 348).

## 2.2 Work motivation

As work success can be reviewed from many different aspects, I want to concentrate in this study to review work success from a motivational perspective. Uusiautti and Määttä (2015, 5-16) describe that some of the basis of work success are positive attitude towards work itself, optimism, inner motivation, willingness to develop and learn, professional pride, and satisfaction at work and in life. Concretely, success can be seen as a good work quality, commitment, and high productivity. When discussing special characteristics of adult learning, Viitala (2005, 141) cites Knowles (1985) definition, which says that motivation plays a crucial role in adult learning when target is to learn something new or un-learn away for example some old habit.

As stated in the introduction on this study, today's working life requires people who have the ability, wish and willingness to learn continuously. Ruohotie (1997, 43) discusses the ideal case where development is happening throughout the working life. Uusiautti's (2008, 220) research proved that accepting new challenges, and seeking different work duties were seen important conducive factors for later on success at work. Need for strong professional regeneration is closely linked with being able to maintain and increase professional qualification. It was clear that people who succeed in their work were also very satisfied in their work. Therefore, we can assume that motivation plays a key role in work success and that there is a direct connection between these two. Jokinen (2004, 213) also pointed out that motivation is seen as fundamental and prerequisite for any learning to take place.

According to Ruohotie (1998, 50-51), there is no only one theory which would cover all the different elements of motivation. Many motivation theories describe motivation from the perspective of physiology and psychological needs. Maybe one of the most well-known motivation theories is Abraham Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs theory which describes in a five-stage pyramid model person's different needs. Basic

life needs, such as biological and physiological, are at the bottom of the model, followed by safety, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs and self-actualization. Maslow (1943, 370) said that needs must be satisfied in the given order. Later on, other researches have extended this model by adding upper levels to the pyramid.

The reason why I wanted to have a viewpoint on Maslow's (1943) model is that it provides, in a way, basis for the other motivation theories utilized in this study. According to two studies from Battistelli, Galletta, Portoghese and Vandenberghe (2013, 17), commitment and motivation are important antecedents of working attitudes and behaviors. Work motivation is commonly defined as an energizing force originating from both inside and outside the individual, driving employees toward intentional action. Being motivated means being "driven" to do something. (Battistelli et al. 2013, 20.)

Two-factor theory, also called the motivation/hygiene theory initiated by Frederick Herzberg (1959), indicates that satisfaction and dissatisfaction arise from different factors. Herzberg (1959) has said, "*What makes people happy is what they do or the way they're utilized, and what makes people unhappy is the way they're treated.*" Herzberg used in his theory two terms, satisfiers and dissatisfiers, to describe the factors that make people happy and the factors that make people unhappy. (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman 1959, 126-136 and Gardner 1977, 197-199.)

Satisfiers are strong motivators, which drive people to develop their abilities and reach their potential. Satisfiers are for example recognition, achievement, possibility of growth and advancement. Dissatisfiers instead are factors that demotivate when they are not present, but rarely motivate when they are present, for example salary, benefits packages and organizational policies and procedures. These factors are extrinsic motivators. Herzberg's (1959) hygiene factors parallel Maslow's (1943) physiological, security, and belongingness needs. Maslow's (1943) self-esteem and self-actualization needs are similar to Herzberg's (1959) motivators. (Gardner 1977,



199).

In the workplace, managers must first address the causes of dissatisfaction and then provide motivation. Removing or reducing the effect of dissatisfiers provides structure, safety, and a sense of belonging. This removes causes of dissatisfaction, but employees might still be demotivated. Applying satisfiers motivates employees by activating higher-level needs. Herzberg's (1959) theory focuses attention on job enrichment. Jobs that are boring or lack content need to be enriched with other elements so that motivating principles can take effect.

### **2.3 Positive engagement at work**

Work plays a prominent role in people's lives and this is the reason why Stairs and Galpin (2013, 155-156) highlight that it is important to understand the power of work engagement. By saying so, they open up tremendous opportunity and potential that there lays if employee engagement is being understood better. According to Popli and Rizvi (2016, 3) there is enough research to claim that employee engagement has a strong positive relationship with business success, at both the individual and the company levels.

There are different concepts and definitions of work engagement, and according to Stairs and Galpin (2013, 156), it encompasses emotional, cognitive, and physical elements. It rarely remains as constant and in its simplest form, Stairs and Galpin (2013, 156) cite Truss et al. (2006) who have defined that engagement means "*passion for work*". Engagement has a multi-dimensional nature and it is much broader and deeper concept than work satisfaction or motivation alone (Stairs & Galpin 2013, 157). They introduced a positive engagement model which has a person-centered approach where drivers and outcomes of engagement are differentiated and engagement is seen primarily an individual and subjective experience. Three main internal drivers of engagement are enjoyment, challenge and meaning. Enjoyment is

related to the situation where employee enjoys his or her work and experiences positive emotions. Challenge factor provides balance to the enjoyment factor where employee is stretched by his or her work and is developing through it. Third aspect, meaning, is the sense of meaning and purpose that employee is feeling in what he or she is doing. (Stairs & Galpin 2013, 160-161.)

Stairs & Galpin (2013, 162-166) suggest that external factors have the smallest impact on work engagement. This means that in practice for example circumstances in which someone is conducting a work have less impact on engagement but it is indeed worth making efforts to create a positive working context. Popli's and Rizvi's (2016, 1) study indicated a significant relationships between leadership styles and employee engagement. Therefore, for example line manager's power to influence many of the environmental topics plays a key role as they may correlate to the happiness experienced by an employee. They can for example support employees to find meaning in their work. Self-determination theory is a theoretical approach to individual's motivation. The theory conceptualizes basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness as innate and essential for ongoing psychological growth, internalization, and well-being. (Battistelli et al. 2013, 20.) These are the pre-requisites of human's well-being, development and positive engagement at work.

Mroz and Quinn (2013, 251) introduce different factors which are leading towards positive organizations. Factors such as positive deviance, integrating positive meaning making, positive emotions, and positive connections, are all contributing to create a work environment which helps organizations toward increased employee happiness and further higher organizational performance. Employee engagement has a strong linkage to good business and financial outcomes, including productivity (Hodges & Asplund 2013, 217-219). Therefore, it is vital to understand what kind of role positive engagement plays in working life. Good performance and efficiency are most prominent when employee is feeling satisfied and well (Uusiautti 2015, 12).

### 3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Main aim of the study is to find out what it requires to be capable of success at work. In addition to this main target, I want to understand what might be the possible obstacles and personal factors hindering an employee's success. Research questions are:

- How do the employees selected in the High Potential and IGTP -programs describe the prerequisites and development as an employee leading to success at work?
- How do the employees selected in the "High Potential" and IGTP -programs describe obstacles and personal factors hindering an employee's success at work?

The idea is to gain the understanding of how talented employees are perceiving and understanding work success. The target is to get new perspectives on the topic, which hopefully contributes further to understand reason behind work success in chosen context. When reasons are being understood, it is possible also for an organization to tackle those factors which they can, and develop those activities which might support employees and organizations to succeed.

According to Hirsjärvi et al. (1997, 181) it is typical for a qualitative study to aim to understand the research object. Also Eskola & Suoranta (2005, 16) emphasize that engagement and aim to gain research persons' own perspective is typical for qualitative researches. In this study, the target was to understand employees' perspectives, and to provide them a possibility to share their thoughts on work success. Therefore, empathy- based research method utilizing frame story approach together

with semi-structured interviews (SSI) were selected to be the data collection methods to hear and understand employees' viewpoints of work success. These choices felt right, as I wanted to outline my research to handle work success from a motivational perspective.

#### **4. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH SETTING**

This study is empirical as it is based on observing a research subject. Empirical studies can be divided into quantitative and qualitative research, based on their purpose. This study is a qualitative mixed methods case study which aims to contextualize, explicate, and understand the research subject. This study targets to describe, analyze and understand reality, and therefore, tried to capture the different understandings, meanings and believes of how success at work is seen and experienced.

##### **4.1 Qualitative research**

According to Flick (2014, 12), the main reason for using qualitative research should be that the research question itself requires that. In this study, especially, to be capable to understand the different factors related to work success, it was necessary to provide the opportunity to focus group to express their thoughts. This targets to provide a deep and versatile perspective on individual differences. Qualitative material allowed participants to express themselves in their own words, and I as a researcher did not want to set too many restrictions beforehand for what the definitions of success at work and/or possible obstacles could be. Learning and understanding the participants' meanings play a key role in this study, as with all qualitative studies according to Creswell (2014, 186). Researcher and research subject are in constant interaction throughout the study which supports to reach the target of understanding the research phenomenon and subject as deeply as possible (Hirsjärvi & Hurme

2008, 21–23, 25). The target of qualitative research is to describe real life and research subject as holistically as possible (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 1997, 161 & Metsämuuronen 2006, 90–91).

I, as a researcher, played a key instrument to collect the data, as not any ready-made questionnaires or instruments were used. This is typical for qualitative study that qualitative researchers collect data themselves by for example examining documents or interviewing participants. (Creswell 2014, 185.) Data collection for this study was done in its natural setting meaning that data was collected where participants experience the issue under study. Creswell (2014, 185) talks about natural setting which means that participants are not taken into labs to a contrived situation. In natural setting, researchers interact with the participants. These are the reasons why this is a qualitative research.

Silverman (2005, 15) points out that qualitative research involves different kind of approaches. With research methods, Silverman (2005, 107, 112) means specific research techniques and continues that there are no right or wrong methods but only appropriate methods to your own research topic. Silverman (2005) notifies that your choice of method should reflect both your research topic and overall research strategy as your methodology shapes which methods are used and how each model is used (Silverman 2005, 122). In this connection we can take into account Creswell's (2014, 186) observation that initial plan for research cannot be tightly prescribed, and some or all phases might be changed during the study process. The initial plan on this study was to collect the data in single phase but along with the study, data collection was decided to be extended. This is discussed more in detail on chapter 4.2.

This study is a case study, and nature of the case study is to do an intensive analysis of an individual unit stressing developmental factors in relation to environment (Flyvbjerg 2011, 301). This requires that data is collected diversely even though

there is no target to generalize research results, nor to create generalization. It is although necessary to see case study as a one-step towards generalization and Metsämuuronen (2006, 90-92) notifies that it is possible to find out interesting connections between different case studies and therefore it should be considered. However, to create generalization should not be the purpose of the case study and therefore this is not the target in this study either.

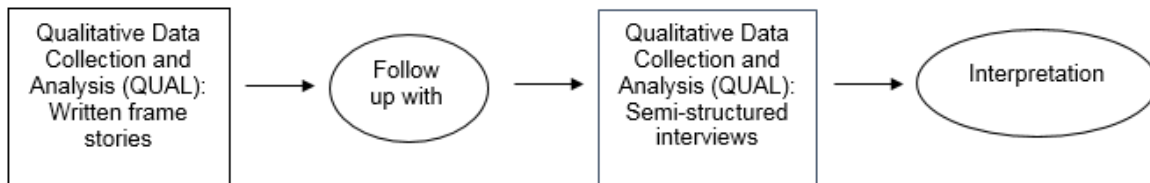
Thomas (2011, 3-7) is talking about “things” when defining a case study meaning that through-out research focus might be for example in a person, institution or event. It could be anything. Therefore, Thomas (2011, 3, 9) prefers to talk about things and justifies that case study is not a method in itself. He suggests to describe that in a case study, focus is on one thing, looked at in depth and from many angles. This study is fulfilling the requirements set by Flyvbjerg (2011) and Thomas (2011) above, as throughout this study, the target was to understand how success is seen in a particular organization. There were two primary motives; to achieve the understanding of how success is understood among research group and to utilize this information in Nokia for organizational development purposes; mainly related to personnel competence development planning. The research does not target to define any generalization but of course when looking at the results in light of earlier studies, they do strengthen the findings from earlier studies, and hopefully lay some new thoughts to be considered and discussed further.

As a conclusion, the purpose of this study is to understand the phenomenon of work success in Nokia and therefore I opted for qualitative research method. The target was to understand success at work as a phenomenon deeply, and to be capable to linkage causes and outcomes together. To summarize this, a qualitative research approach was chosen for a few reasons: the sensitive nature of the research topic itself and the willingness not to pre-define in detail what work success is but to provide an opportunity to employees to express their feelings and thoughts.

## 4.2 Multimethod case study

According to Creswell (2014, 4), mixed methods research means the combination of qualitative and quantitative data for one study. Creswell (2009, 325) has studied mixed methods approaches for over 20 years and according to him, “mixing” or blending of data, provides a stronger understanding of the problem or question. Mixed methods studies have stabilized their position in recent years. Creswell (2009, 329) says that method is still under movement which in a way describes its status and position.

Mixed methods involve both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis (Creswell 2014, 217). It is important to notice that for this study, data was collected only by using qualitative methods and therefore it is necessary to note Teddlie’s and Tashakkori’s (2003, 10 - 11) viewpoint that usually mixed methods and multimethod design might be mixed together. As for this study, more than one method was used but paradigm remains the same, as qualitative in both, this study is a qualitative multimethod case study.



**Figure 3** Complemented explanatory sequential multimethod design presented originally by Creswell 2009, 220

Method used in this study was shaped to its final form after studying different methods presented by Creswell on his book focusing on Research Design (2014). Creswell (2009, 224) speaks about explanatory sequential mixed method design in which quantitative data is being collected first and then analyzed. Results of analysis are then used to plan the second data collection phase. Creswell (2014, 224) continues that quantitative results typically inform the types of participants to be selected to second phase. Even though Creswell has purely focus on using quantitative and qualitative methods, design itself fits to the needs of this study and therefore Creswell's (2009) explanatory sequential mixed methods design is used where applicable. (Figure 3).

#### **4.2.1 Phase I - empathy-based method**

In the first phase, empirical data was collected by using method of empathy-based stories (EMBS). This method has an established role as qualitative research method in especially sociology, social psychology and pedagogy and method has strengthened its place by taking into account person's active aspects like awareness, language, reflection, and active thinking (Eskola 1997, 13). Recent study by Wallin, Helenius, Saarinen-Kauppinen & Eskola (2015, 256) showed that empathy-based story method is used most commonly in Finland in thesis done in Educational and Social Sciences. According to Eskola (1997, 12), the increased usage of empathy-based method is because it provides an answer to criticism against research in which data is collected by using laboratory tests. In addition, there is a less manipulation than for example in laboratory tests (Eskola 1998, 44). Empathy-based method aims to understand a person as part of the culture in its natural environment and targets to provide answers to what different things and phenomena mean to people (Wallin et al. 2015, 248).



#### **4.2.2 Phase II - Qualitative Themed Interviews**

Wengraf (2001, 3-4) states that research is done to “get a better understanding of reality”. This definition fits perfectly to the reason the interviews were decided to conduct for this study. As stated earlier, frame stories did not alone provide enough data and validity for this study, and therefore, during the second phase of data collection, qualitative theme interviews were conducted to deepen the data, and to get a wider understanding about the subjects.

Semi-structured interviews (SSI) are designed to have a number of interview questions prepared in advance but the interview itself is an open conversation, allowing ideas to be brought up during the interview (Wengraf 2001, 5). Participants are free to respond to these open-ended questions as they like (McIntosh & Morse 2015, 1.) According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2008, 47), it is typical for a semi-structured interview that some of the interview aspects have been defined beforehand but not perhaps all of them. Therefore, what is different in a semi-structured interview compared to a structured interview, is that a structured interview has set rigorous set of questions, which do not allow one to divert. Galletta (2012, 77) underlines the significance of listening closely to the interviewee’s points and locate and place on hold points in the interview which researcher can later on elaborate.

#### **4.3 Participant selection and data collection**

For this study, mixing the methods happened during the data collection phase. The original target in this study was to gain the research data only through frame stories but as the amount of received frame stories was rather small, 15 frame stories altogether, it was decided to deepen the data by conducting semi-structured interviews as well.

When considering the applicability of mixed methods to a study, McKim (2015, 1) suggests to ask “*if mixed methods is going to add more value than a single method?*” For this study, my answer being a researcher is purely yes, as after a first data collection phase, the amount of data was not enough to draw scientifically validated conclusions. There was a clear reason and need to collect more data in order to be capable to understand the phenomenon in more detail. In addition, there was a need and wish to have viewpoints from employees in different ages so that the phenomena of success at work could be understood widely, and that the data would serve the particular organization as a whole including viewpoints from different generations. Therefore, it was decided to extend the focus group of this study to interview also three (3) younger employees who are part of the IGTP-program so that the viewpoints of younger employees are understood. Except one, all the seven (7) IGTP-employees are under the age of 30. The average age among employees in HiPo-program was 41,2 years and there were no employees who would be under the age of 30. Therefore, it was important to notice that to be able to understand the views of younger employees, it was necessary to extend the research group to cover IGTP's as well.

#### **4.3.1 Phase I – empathy-based data collection**

It is natural in a qualitative research that research object is being observed in its natural environment (Creswell 1998, 17). In the first data collection phase, data was collected in a form of written stories. In a form of written stories, the research person's perspectives and voice are being heard. It is typical for a qualitative research to provide an opportunity to research persons to share their experiences and hear their voice (Hirsjärvi et al. 1997, 165). Writing can also be seen as an opportunity and exercise to employees to consciously reflect their thoughts and perspectives.

Empathy-based method is a data collection method where short stories are being written according to instructions which researcher has given in a frame story. The

idea with the frame story is that the respondent identifies with the situation described in the story frame and writes a continuation for it. This method of data collection refers to imaginative stories and the method of role-play (Eskola 1998, 10). In fact, originally empathy-based method was divided into two main options. First one is *active role-playing* where respondents are given role characters, and they are instructed to demonstrate their interpretations throughout acting. Another option is *non-active role-playing* or *role-playing of the non-active sort* where respondent is empathizing to another's situation in writing. (Eskola 1997, 6-7 & Eskola 1998, 10-11.) According to the basic idea of the empathy-based stories method, different kind of situations can be observed, analyzed, and interpreted by respondents.

Frame stories are not necessarily accounts of reality, but possible descriptions about what might happen and what different things mean. Method makes it possible to break away from present, because stories can deal with the future also. One essential feature of this method is variation. Variation means that there are at least two different kind of frame stories created where one or many things or phenomena are being varied. By doing this, there is a possibility to build up a similar kind of arrangement as with experimental design and by changing certain factor or factors, it can be researched what kind of impact factors variation has to the stories. (Wallin et al. 2015, 249.) Therefore, by comparing the stories it is found out what kind of effect the varied feature has concerning the research subject. Variation distinguishes the method of empathy-based stories from many other methods of acquiring data (Halttunen 2003, 6).

Frame stories should be short enough so that they do not provide too much stimulus to respondents, which guarantees that comparison is easier (Eskola 1998, 44). Empathy-based stories are supposed to produce data anchored in a shared cultural directory, and to capture both the cultural meanings and the contextual prerequisites affecting a certain situation (Salo, Nylund, Stjernstrom 2015, 7). According to Wallin

et al. (2015, 249), it depends on the research and its complexity how many collected stories there should be. Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 322) state that 10-15 frame stories might be enough. More important than the amount of stories, is the quality of those.

Two frame stories were created for this study (Annex 1 & 2). With the first one, I focused on setting the frame for talented employee who had been nominated as part of the HiPo-program due to his/her excellent performance. With the other story I changed the set up in a way that employee described in this story had not succeeded in his or her work and asked to continue the story by describing what could be the possible reasons leading to this situation. The purpose was to have as similar frame stories as possible, and to change only the essential part of the story; the perspective of successful employee and not successful employee. Both of the stories were quite short so that they did not provide too much stimulus to respondents as suggested by Eskola (1998, 44).

Before collecting the proper data, I tested how the frame stories functioned. For this assessment, I invited two (2) high potential employees to a session where I wanted to hear their opinion on the clarity of the frame story instructions. I wanted to test both of the stories and therefore decided to do assessment with two employees. Before having the sessions with them I shared with them via e-mail exactly the same frame story introduction and actual frame stories which were used in actual data collection as well. I asked them to review instructions before our meeting and prepare a frame story. The purpose of the meetings was to know if employees felt that the instructions to conduct a frame story were clear enough and if they had any suggestions to me regarding the instructions. Both of them told that the instructions were clear but recommended to go through the instructions verbally also to engage the audience and not just send it via e-mail which was actually my first plan. In addi-

tion, they both suggested that it would be good to mention for how long it approximately takes to write the story. Their experiences were that it takes approximately 30 minutes and they both suggested that it would be good to reserve a quiet moment to ensure full focus and attention. After I aligned these proposal with my supervisors, both in Nokia and in the University, I decided to set up teleconference sessions with all of the 95 employees to go through the frame story instructions verbally. The assessment confirmed that sending instructions and receiving replies electronically via e-mail was working well.

The frame stories were collected via e-mail in two phase between 9.2-26.2.2016. Written frame stories were received from 15 HiPo –employees. The research group was divided in four parts and they were invited to a 30 minutes conference call where data collection method and their input requirements were introduced. The session invitation contained a short introduction of myself and thesis purposes (Annex 2). The sessions were organized because of two reasons; 1) to engage attendee's interest to participate in this study and 2) to ensure data collection instructions and expectations set were understood correctly. Dividing the research group into four parts was done in order to be able to reach all the participants in different time zones. Two of the sessions were managed on 9.2.2016 and for these colleagues “negative” frame story was introduced. Two other sessions were conducted on 10.2.2016 and “positive” frame story was introduced to this group. Out from 95 invited, totally 27 high-potentials joined these altogether four (4) calls.

After each of the four calls, e-mail (Annex 3) including data collection instructions and frame stories were sent out. Totally 47 high-potentials received “negative” frame story and 48 received a “positive” one. Deadline was set after one and a half weeks after the sessions. Altogether, the e-mail was sent to 95 recipients from which 15 answered and send written frame stories. I could not have an influence to replying circumstances but I as a researcher can only trust that respondents have concentrated when writing the frame story and that their stories are truthful. At the same

time, the story is not too sensitive and demanding. I would assume that the requirement to write a frame story offered a good opportunity to an employee to reflect on success. A couple of respondents mentioned that it was a good exercise as it forced to think about something that is not so often thought of.

Altogether eight (8) men and seven (7) women wrote a frame story and the average age of them all was 42,6 years old (Table 1). Average age among GOPS HiPos is 41,2 which is slightly above the average age of GOPS being 40,6. Rough average age in Nokia is of 37,8 . Most of the respondents were from Europe but replies were received also from Asia, North and South-America (Table 2).

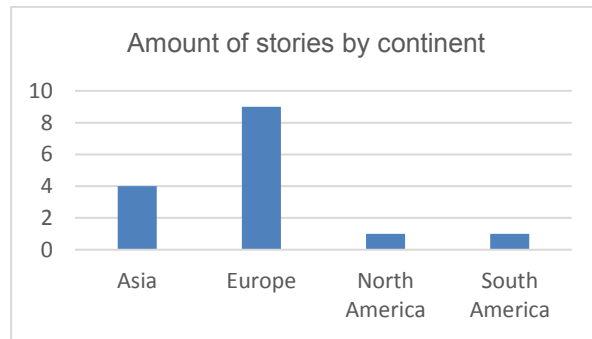
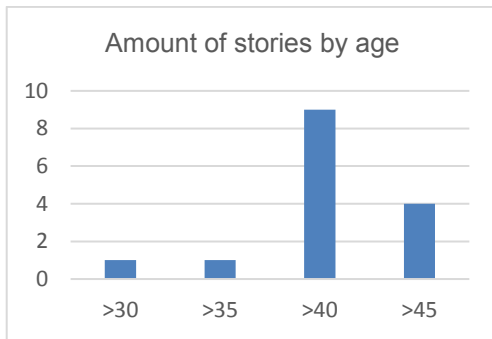


Table 1. Amount of stories by age.

Table 2. Amount of stories by continent.

Out from 15 respondents, 13 of them were over 40 years old. Respondents have long working experiences as 13 of them have over 15 years working in Nokia (Table 3). All the respondents have minimum of colleague level of education and eight (8) of the respondents have a Master's degree (Table 4).

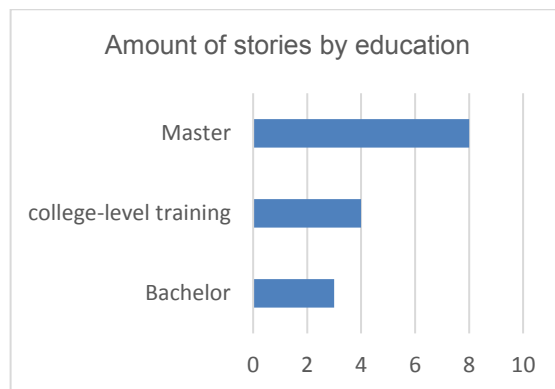
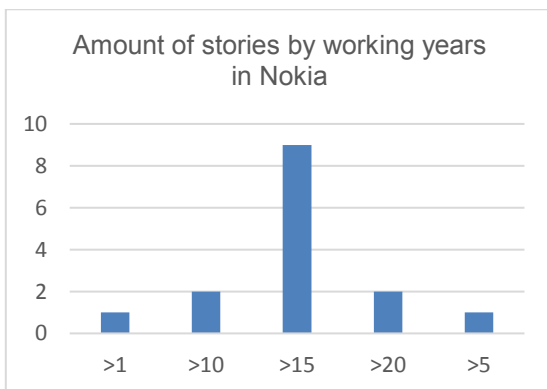


Table 3. Amount of stories by working years in Nokia. Table 4. Amount of stories by education.

Results presented in Table 3. indicate that widening the research group to younger employees was needed to be able to understand the viewpoints of younger employees also. Therefore, I decided to interview four younger employees and one older one. To be able to keep the focus with employees who have succeeded in their work, I decided to extend my study group to cover also some of the employees who were part of International Graduate Program (IGTP) in Global Operations organization. IGTP-employees have not had a chance to be part of HiPo-program and therefore to be able to reach out younger successful employees, it was necessary to widen the research scope. Based on the excellent performance and fast growth of these IGTP: s employees, it was reasonable to include IGTP-employees in this study as well. One older employee was selected from 2014 HiPo-program as the employee has been recognized as a successful employees and therefore naturally fits to this study focus group to balance the age range.

As there was no purpose to create any generalizations outside of this organization, more important than the amount of respondents is the quality of the data (Hirsjärvi ym. 1997, 181). Also Eskola & Suoranta (2005, 18) confirm that one of the criteria scientifically valid data is not the amount of data but the quality itself. Therefore, it was essential to put sufficient effort to the interviews so that they would further support to answer the research question. Purpose of the collected data is to support to build conceptual understanding of the phenomena of research subject (Eskola & Suoranta 2005, 62).

Eskola & Suoranta (2005, 62-63) emphasize that it is research's responsibility to decide when the amount of data is enough and consider if there is a possibility to find answers to research question with the amount of data being collected. When focusing on qualitative research, in general level, saturation is being discussed. Saturation is the point in data collection when no new or relevant information emerges

with respect to the newly constructed theory. (Eskola & Suoranta 2005, 63.) According to Creswell (2014, 248) this is the phase when researcher stops collecting data because fresh data no longer sparks new insights. Same themes such as versatile background, personal features, co-operation and networking were visible in frame stories and accordingly some level of saturation could be seen. Similar happened with the interviews, as after four interviews were conducted, it was noticed that same themes were arising. Especially the importance of willingness to learn, pro-active-ness, open-mindedness and resilience were themes coming up in each of the interviews. At the end, all together six interviews were conducted. Reason for this was that I as an interviewer did not have experience of conducting semi-structured interviews and after conducting two interviews, I felt that more interview data would be needed. I had no previous experience in interviewing and noticed that during the data collection my interviewing skills developed, and the interviews turned out to be more and more fruitful. Having more interviews done, I also noticed that some saturation happened: the interview data and frame stories started to repeat certain themes such as willingness to learn and taking a lead in own development. According to my evaluation, these sets of data complemented each other well. These are discussed later on when results are being introduced.

#### **4.3.2 Phase II Interview data collection**

Semi-structured interviews were decided to be conducted targeting to contribute to and strengthen the data gained through the frame stories. This is a typical reason why mixed and multimethod designs are used in scientific studies.

A successful interview requires good planning and preparation. Creswell (2014, 194) highlights the importance of planning proper interview protocol before conducting actual interviews. Interviews should be organized well and they should follow the same procedures from interview to another (Creswell 2014, 194). According to Wengraf (2001, 5, 191-193), semi-structured interviews are high-risk, high-gain, and



high-analysis operations, and therefore, it is important to start the planning early. For this study, lack of earlier experience of interviewing was seen as one of the main risks and the fact that being at the same time interviewer and colleague to interviewees caused a bit nervousness to myself as a researcher.

Interview itself offered a lot of potential to gain needed data as the purpose of interviews were to strengthen the data. Interviewers aim is to find out how interviewee builds up meanings and remember at the same time that during the interview, new meanings and connections are being built (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 49). This target was kept in mind and therefore all the interviews were recorded so that it was possible to listen to the interview later on and focus on capturing and creating the meanings.

According to Wengraf (2001, 77), the formulation of questions is the key in semi-structured interviews and that it is crucial to move from topics to questions. Even though the nature of the dialogue in semi-structured interview is open, it needs to be fully clear to the interviewer what the questions to be asked are. For this study, the interview was planned to include three different phases. (Annex 5) First phase of the interview focused on the introduction of study and interviewer and warming up to ask interviewee background information such as gender, age, education, working years in Nokia, and current position and previous positions in Nokia or elsewhere. At the second phase of the interview, prerequisites of and development leading to success at work were discussed. At the third phase of the interview, obstacles and personal factors hindering an employee's success at work were discussed.

Interviews were conducted with six (6) employees who were selected employees among HiPo (2014) program and IGTP –program (2014). In this way, focus was kept with talented employees. Interviewees were contacted first via e-mail to ask their interest to participate in the study. (Annex 4) Semi-structured interviews were done via teleconference call between 15.4-29.4.2016. The advantages of telephone administered SSIs in this study were that they enabled to cover large geographic area

including different countries. They are also less costly in terms of time, easy to arrange, and therefore efficient. (McIntosh & Morse 2015, 7.)

Between the time of collecting the frame stories and conducting interviews, organizations were changed due to the Nokia and Alcatel-Lucent integration. Even organizations were changed, it did not have an effect on the selected target group of this study as it was decided to keep the focus of this study on selected HiPo and IGTP employees in Global Operations organization as this study was started before the actual Nokia and Alcatel-Lucent integration happened in January 2016.

#### **4.4 Data analyses**

Overall, the emphasis in this chapter and its sub-chapters is to generally discuss how to analyze written text and interview data. Aim of the analysis of qualitative research is to “*create verbal and clear description of studied phenomenon*” (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108). Analysis is done continuously throughout the study on its every stage (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 108). Flick (2014, 370) points out that in qualitative data analysis, in most cases several levels of analysis are involved. For example, explicit and implicit levels of meaning. This means that as a researcher, I should try to read “between the lines” of what is said and what is not said. Interpretation is the core activity of qualitative data analysis for understanding or explaining what is in the data (Flick 2014, 372, 375). Galletta (2012, 18) points out that data analysis plan should leave open the possibility that something unanticipated comes out from the data which might produce new knowledge grounded in the research content. This is the particular strength of qualitative research as it offers the inductive approach, following for an iterative and on-going pursuit of meaning.

Galletta (2012, 119) helped me to understand that in qualitative research, data analysis occurs alongside data collection. As a researcher, I needed to return frequently back to my data in order to ensure meanings. I tried to keep this on my mind after I

decided to conduct the interviews and, for example, wrote down first notes out from the interviews already during the interview. Also after every interview, I marked down other observations I did, in addition to the interview itself, such as the atmosphere and the feelings I observed during the interview. This was done in a purpose to support further analyzing the data in analysis phase, also suggested by Galletta (2012, 120).

Before analyzing the data, it needs to be prepared and organized (Flick 2014, 371). Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 130) recommend to write down where, when, and from whom research data was collected. For this study, previously presented matters were documented in order that this information would be easily available in later phase when doing the actual analysis.

Data was analyzed by utilizing content analysis. Purpose of the analysis is to bring clarity on the subject and hence, create new information (Eskola & Suoranta 2005, 137). Content analysis is one of the classical procedures for analyzing textual material and goal is to reduce material (Flick 2014, 429). Aim of the content analysis is to organize information in compact and pellucid form trying not to lose crucial information. Therefore, aim is to create meaningful, clear and coherent entirety, which increases the value of research's information. Content analysis can be done in three different ways; data-driven; theory-driven or theory-bonded. All three approaches are used to interpret meaning from the content of data. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 95–97, 108–111, 117.)

In this study, content analysis was made in theory-driven way, as part of the theoretical concepts, such as work success and work motivation, are brought to the study as such. According to Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 117), it is essential, if there is a target to pick certain specific things or phrases from original data, or if approach is done more according to its own conditions. In my analysis I utilized the represented factors in Uusiautti's research (2008, 106) such as personality, life condition, work

characteristics, motivation and professional expertise. Uusiautti's (2008, 107) research revealed that inner motivation was a connecting factor among top workers. In this study, I cannot exclude the effects of Uusiautti's (2008) and Uusiautti's & Määttä's (2015) research to my analysis as they have also influenced on how research problems were formed in this study.

Data analysis process has three (3) stages. These stages are 1) reducing the data 2) grouping the data (clustering) and 3) creating theoretical concepts (abstracting). Target of the data analysis is that the material is analyzed systematically, following rules of procedure, devising the material into content analytical units. On first stage, data is grouped and summarized into smaller parts. Purpose of reducing the data is to first eliminate the data, which is not meaningful for the research. This stage is led by research questions and supportive analysis questions which direct to transcribe and code exactly those phrases, which are essential for the research. In this study, the aim was to do reducing as Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 109) suggested, by coloring phrases by using different colors. Marked phrases will be listed to another concept at later stage. Within second stage, data is grouped. Purpose of the grouping is to find out similarities and differences from the data. These similarities and differences are classified into different classes, when data will become tighter as single factors are being included into upper concepts. Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 89) provide important attention as when using MEBS as a method for data collection, the stories are already themed as a result of the variation in the scripts, for example, a positive theme and a negative theme as it was done for this study.

Directional questions were utilized in data analysis. This was done in order to keep the focus on right topics and to get support to find the answers to the themes describing pre-requisite and obstacles to success at work. Analysis questions to the data were following:

1. How employees define work success?
2. What are the different elements which work success consists of?

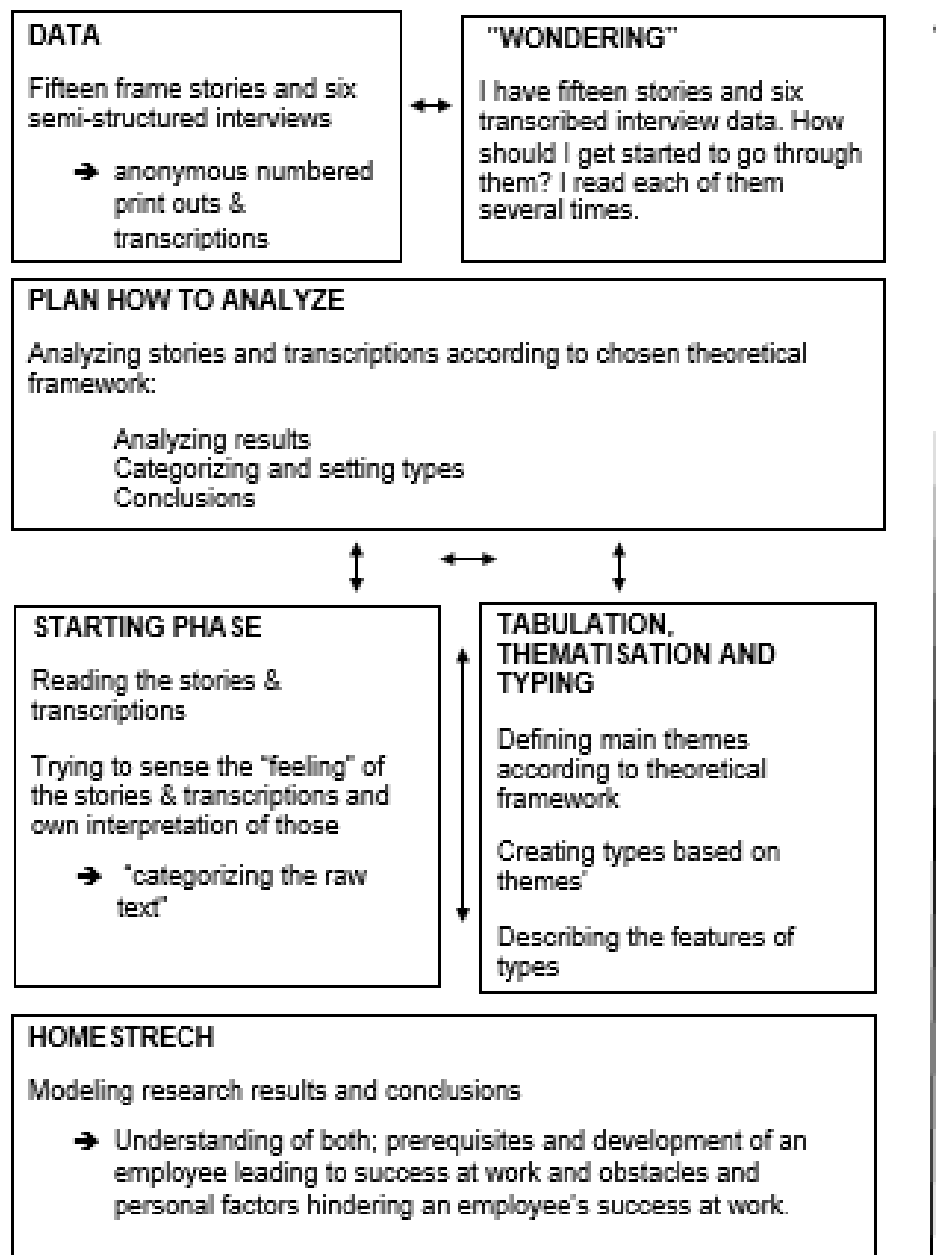
3. How motivation appears in frame stories?
4. How a successful employee is seen? How an unsuccessful employee is seen?
5. What kind of new expectations employees are ready to set themselves to be capable to succeed?
6. What factors prevent success at work?

On the last stage of data analysis process, purpose is to classify essential and unessential data. In addition, the research's empirical data is aimed to connect the research's theoretical concepts. The aspects of text interpretation, following the research questions, are divided into categories, which were carefully founded and revised in the analyzing process. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 95–97, 108–111, 117.)

According to Grönfors (2011, 94), content analysis is a way to observe research data and not to analyze behavior. He points out that content analysis helps to organize and structure data for conclusions but it cannot be as such directly used for creating conclusions. Content analysis can be connected with context analysis, which provides depth to understand the research object. Within context analysis, also environment where research objects in questions exist is taken into account. Content analysis together with context analysis supports us to get descriptive data out from a phenomenon. (Grönfors 2011, 94.) In this study, I as a researcher feel that it is important to notify the meaning of the context as I also work in the company from which research data is being collected. This can effect on my interpretations even though I try to analyze the data as neutrally as possible.

Creswell (2014, 187) defines qualitative research as being interpretative research. With this, he means that naturally researcher's biases, values, personal background, such as gender, history, culture and socio-economic status, shape interpretations been made. Having a double role as a researcher and an employee, I might be capable to understand and point out certain perspectives which might have been difficult to notice without having deep insight and experience on the context. For example, understanding the job roles the employees have helped me to understand their

work related examples better, and put their data in a right context. Also vice versa, as a researcher and an employee I might not notice something which another researcher would be able to. Alternatively, I may have created favorable or unfavorable conclusions. Therefore, it is crucial that in the analysis, every conclusion has been explained and evidences are shown in a form of exposing reasons for analysis and conclusions presented.



**Figure 4** Modeling how data was analyzed by utilizing Koski-Heikkinen's (2013, 130) model

#### **4.4.1 Phase I – empathy-based data analysis**

I started the data analyses by printing out the frame stories and I did the coding for them as well. I read through the written frame stories several times and utilized the questions I devised earlier for the purposes of data analysis. Frame stories were organized and numbered according to their variations as recommended by Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 130). I numbered the frame stories in the order I received them and defined whether the story was negative or positive, for example ESBS1n (first frame story, negative) and ESBS3p (third frame story, positive).

I used color-coding for identifying same topics from the stories and also counted how many times each topic was mentioned. For example, references to collaboration could be identified from each of the frame stories, as every frame story touched in a way or another the importance of good work relationships, the importance of being a team player or consulting others. This helped me to give significance to the topic, as Wengraf (2001, 208-213) has suggested it. Also according to Eskola and Suoranta (1998, 131), using own markings and doing transcription ensures consistent handling of data. As my data analysis was partly done in a theory driven way, I utilized Uusiautti's (2015, 133) model of elements and relationships in success when categorizing my data. I also marked with an orange sticker those parts of the text I would take as a data extract to include in my final report.

#### **4.4.2 Phase II - Interview analyses**

I transcribed all the interviews by utilizing SoundScriber –program so that it would be easier to observe and analyze the contents of the interviews. According to McIntosh and Morse (2015, 8), it is crucial that the interviews are transcribed exactly (word-for-word) from the tape and not paraphrased. In addition, they suggest using symbols to indicate the tone of voice. After the interviews were in a written format, I encoded them with numbers from one to six to protect interviewee's anonymity.



I started to work by item, as suggested by McIntosh and Morse (2015, 9), first reading all participants' responses to the same question. I proceeded similarly as with the frame stories, and I used color-coding for identifying same topics from the transcripts and counted how many times each topic was mentioned. I highlighted those key words and phrases, and made notes in the margins so that I remembered those afterwards. In addition, I took into account my own symbols I had written during, and right after the interviews. The symbols helped me to do the coding, and especially when I was choosing the data extracts out from the interviews, the tone of voice had an effect when setting the meaning for what was said. After the analysis, I created a synthesis, which means I collected all the main points and I created interpretations and conclusions out from the results.

#### **4.5 Reliability and validity of this study**

Concepts of reliability and validity are used in this study in order to reflect how well the study meets the criteria of scientific research. For decades, there has been an on-going discussion of how well the concepts of reliability and validity apply to qualitative research as they are originally applied for quantitative research (Golafshani 2003, 600-604). Without taking further stand on this debate, the concepts of reliability and validity give a good enough bases for this study to reflect them both.

Validity means that the study is capable to answer its research questions; it has been created comprehensively and results and conclusions are real. Kirk and Miller (1986, 29–30) point out that there is a risk that a researcher is observing things incorrectly or is not noticing them at all. Therefore, the question of how the researcher sees social reality, and what kind of language is in use, are both linked closely to the validity, and should be taken into account. In qualitative research, concepts of plausibility and credibility can be used as they help to consider how well a researcher is capable to construct participant's views and how well he or she is able to explain

those to others. (Eskola & Suoranta 2000, 219-220.) Different phases of this research were explained and conclusions either were reflected to earlier studies or used theories. Making all the phases explicit was done in order to strengthen the both, plausibility and credibility, of this study.

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 140) makes it to concrete and defines that in the name of reliability, a researcher needs to be capable to describe how data was collected and handled, also to be able to give reasons why certain methodology was chosen, and reveal own pre-thinking about the subject in question. Data collection was described in chapter 4.3 and analysis of data on chapter 4.4. Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009, 142) also mention that it is meaningful to consider how researcher's own thinking has been changed during the research. This is crucial to take into account as for this study, and as discussed in my content analysis chapter 4.4.1, acting as a researcher and an employee at the same time, naturally affects on my interpretations, even though I would try to analyze the data as neutrally as possible.

Uusiautti (2015, 3) points out that in multimethod studies, it is necessary to define the different importance of the different data. In this study, the aim was to strengthen the data by conducting interviews after the collection of the frame stories and while doing so evaluate the validity of the data gained through the frame stories. The frame stories helped to set the frame to the interviews, as structure for the interviews were designed based on the first analysis done for the frame stories. In this regard, the data collected through the interviews served this study well in light of further helping to answer the research questions and it gave possibility to widen the participants' age range. By doing this, particularly the organization received valuable information encompassing the whole organization better. Also Creswell (2014, 55) points out that through different data and perspectives, it is possible to get more comprehensive and diverse picture of the subject. This fits to the reason why the multimethod approach is being used in this study. It supports at the end to answer in depth the research questions which been set for this study.

By utilizing the method of empathy-based stories, there is also a possibility to gain different kind of information, for example, tacit knowledge, as with empathy-based approach respondent is positioned in a situation to use his or her imagination (Eskola 1998, 13). Revealing and understanding especially tacit knowledge can be seen as important information from the perspective of organizational development.

According to Wengraf (2001, 77) it is always useful to think of the variety of different research questions that can be addressed to the same topic. I tried to keep this aspect in mind during each of the interviews as, for example, the interviewee was first asked to describe a person who has succeed in his or her work and at a later phase of an interview, asked to describe a successful employee. Different phrasing of a question approach was used in order to strengthen the validity of the interviews. It is important to notice that a study can never produce a perfect understanding of the subject but of course validity depends on how well a researcher's interpretations represent the facts shared by interviewees and how well the researcher is able to express those with others. (Eskola & Suoranta 2000, 219-222.)

Wengraf (2001, 80) suggests also to consider own resources and the importance of needed preparations done before conducting the interviews. He points out that in order to be able to produce a good research, it is necessary for a researcher to have pre-knowledge and understanding of the subject and its conceptual framework before having the interview (Wengraf 2001, 80-82). For this study, preparations and pre-analysis done for frame stories supported me as a researcher to be better prepared for the interviews as theoretical framework of success became more familiar especially when I started to analyze and interpret the frame stories.

It was interesting to notice that in the frame stories, each of the respondent wrote under the name of Madeleine if respondent was a woman and under the name of Mike, if respondent was a man. In a way, this proves that a respondent has positioned him or herself into the story, which is the key purpose in empathy-based

method. Frame stories included fixed names which were Madeleine and Mike (Annex 3).

In light of the reliability, it is also vital to note that the nature of the study and context where the data was collected might have affected to the quality of the data. Myself being at the same time a colleague and a researcher might have affected the confidence of how much participants were ready to share with me.

#### **4.6 Ethicality of this study**

Ethical aspects need to be taken into account when doing research in a particular work community to protect the employees who participate in the study. When data was collected from the employees, it was stressed to the participants that all the replies will be handled anonymously. The interviews were recorded but they and the written frame stories were deleted after analysis was made in order to protect the participant's anonymity.

In addition, Flick (2014, 50-51) discusses the importance of codes of ethics and points that researchers must be able to explicate the methodological procedures in their projects. It is also necessary to consider not to cause harm to participants when collecting the data and ensure doing justice to participants when analyzing the data (Flick 2014, 57-59). Giving the freedom to participants to attend or not to attend to the data pursued this. Flick (2014, 59) suggests to encrypt the specific details to ensure confidentiality of research. In this study, the company name was not encrypted but participants' identity was encrypted to protect employees' identity.

Creswell (2014, 186) points out that researcher's reflexivity should be noted in qualitative research. It is equitable to state that my own background and role as being an employee and a researcher at the same time might have affected the interpretations, such as the themes they advance and the meaning they ascribe to the data. This is natural but needs to be noted as it may have shaped the direction of the study. It is

impossible as a researcher to be aware of the all-possible thoughts that may affect subconsciously and therefore this aspect should be understood and respected.

## 5 RESULTS

Employee's perceptions of success are described as results. As theory-driven data analysis method was used in the analysis, it was clearly visible from the data that success was seen both as a process, and as a result. Uusiautti's (2015, 133) model of success seen in two level as a process and as a result was pellucidity recognized from the data. Especially in the interviews where it was easier to deep dive to the topics by raising additional questions based on what was replied at first, interviewees started to have diverse perspectives to success.

Uusiautti (2015, 133) divides success as a results in three different categories; individual work success, team level work success, and organizational work success which is measurable. All these categories could be identified clearly from the data. Individual success as a result was for example seen in two-part; implementing something completely new or as a result of improving something already existing.

*“... I'll say there are two type of success. One is you create something from zero to one right, there's some...it's no matter if it's process or study or for example sales it's not existing in a company before but after you're doing it, you are creating it and that is some kind of success to me and the other thing is something which is already in there and you improved it, so make the current process or method better, so that's also kind of success...”* (Interview 2)

One of the reasons why success was linked to the results could be that employee naturally linkages key performance indicators (KPI) with success. This was heavily

visible from the data. Nokia is using key performance indicators in most of its activities to measure the progress of different things on regular basis. Key performance indicator (KPI) is a type of performance measurement and depending on the topic and area; some of those are linked to each employee's individual target setting. Key performance indicators are used in all the levels; individual, team and organizational. Achieving something in agreed time was also linked with success.

*"It's [success] you reach the KPI: s [Key performance indicator] set to you or your organization and you manage to get those targets or even go above." (Interview 1)*

*"If you under-perform and KPI: s are bad in your area, you don't reach the targets." (Interview 3)*

*"Setting reachable but challenging targets can be way to success." (ESBS11n)*

Team level work success did not come up that clearly from the interviews but in two of the frame stories, this aspect was brought up. What is interesting is that team level work success was mentioned by the employees from Asian and Pacific Coasts countries where collectivism has maybe a stronger presence than in European countries where individualism is being emphasized more. It is generally known that communities are important in Asia and Pacific Coasts and therefore co-operating in a community is valued. Schwartz (2011, 43) has widely studied human values across the cultures and in his seven cultural orientations, South and South-East Asia, is positioned to an area where cultures are hierarchic and conservative. In these locations, people are finding meaning in life through social relationships. This is different than for example in Western Europe where autonomy and intellectual autonomy is highly appreciated (Schwartz 2011, 39 & 43). This could be one reason why this aspect was pointed out in the frame stories as well.

*"As a result, his team does not work in cohesive manner, the actions initiated are not matching amongst the colleagues and thus the output is not what Mike expected/conveyed. This is matter of "TEAM DISCIPLINE." (ESBS11n)*

*"He utilized knowledge in the team and did not try to do everything by his own. There was the competence in the team to make it happen." (ESBS9p)*

Work success as a process got many aspects, which are discussed in detail in below chapters. These different aspects were noticed in every of the frame stories and interviews. The passage below from one of the frame stories indicates that especially employee related factors were emphasized. Reason for this could be that talented employees tended to explain the success with the aspects they could have an influence on rather than finding reasons from other people. This is explicable as frame stories were varied which proves that in both situations, being successful and being non-successful, factors given are closely individual related.

*"Madeleine asked herself if I will be able to take up the challenge from others or maybe challenge back. These kind of working habits made her stand out from peers since she is being able to learn, gain data, collaborate, challenge, develop and execute her job and influence others." (ESBS8p)*

During the following sub-chapters, results of the analysis are being presented. Results are categorized according to the themes that were interpreted from the data. Themes are partly overlapping and interconnected. Therefore it can be stated that they complement each other.

## **5.1 Willingness to learn and being curious**

In every frame story and interview, willingness to learn was mentioned in a way or another as one of the most crucial factors leading to success. This indicates that talented employees have internalized the requirement of today's working life to have capabilities and willingness towards continuous learning and self-development. Constant changes are normal in today's working life and to be capable to succeed, this should be accepted. Cascio (2013, 13) states that change is no longer additive and

no longer moves in a straight line. In today's world, change is continuous, abrupt and non-linear.

*"If you understand that a transformation and change is a part of life (not only negative thing), you will manage things well." (ESBS3p)*

*"Never stop learning" (ESBS11n)*

*"They [un-successful employees] are not willing to learn anything, they are not willing to grow as persons so it's kind of pity. And I would say it is a kind of not successful for them." (Interview 4)*

So understanding the importance of continuous learning and setting it as a priority was seen important. This analysis is corroborated out from the variation of frame stories, as unwillingness to learn was mentioned as one of the possible obstacles for success. In addition, when obstacles were discussed in semi-structured interviews, un-willingness to learn and passiveness to try new things were emphasized. What is relevant to notice, is that talented employees tend to define success as something which is above standard and agreed, and something which they themselves can affect.

*"This question is quite difficult for me because I can't judge anyone if the work is done properly and if the person is not doing some major mistakes I consider it to be OK but if we are talking about the success as a growing as a specialist, then of course the main obstacles which might be are the same. So if the person is not willing to learn anything if the person is not willing to communicate then he / she will never become a specialist." (Interview 4)*

*"Especially own learning and development. I often hear feedback, we have the PDPs [=personal development plan], and expectation is that they get the suggestion from line manager. Short, mid, long term....lot of people underestimate and they are waiting more to get the proposals than pro-actively think and plan their next steps." (Interview 1)*

In addition to understanding the importance of continuous learning, talented employees have internalized that they themselves are the managers in their own development. They were satisfied with the different opportunities Nokia is offers and they appreciated those even though the company has had tight restrictions on taking part



in external trainings or programs. Therefore, it can be said that one obstacle preventing success is when an employee has a passive attitude towards continuous learning or is not capable of seeing or creating the opportunities on his or her own.

*“Yeah, I mean I would agree with this fact [importance of learning and development] because a lot of times like, the all of us, the employees they sort of through back that responsibility on to the manager, or to the job or to the organization where they are like, Ok, we are doing the job if they need to help build the way to their development. And lot of times lot of times actually that’s the wrong way. You need to take care of your learning and development.” (Interview 5)*

*“Madeleine did not took any action to learn something new and was just waiting that her line manager would do something. She was very passive. She taught that there wasn’t anything suitable for her and was complaining as there was not possibility to go to external courses.” (EBS1n)*

The line manager’s role of being supportive and encouraging was highlighted when the importance of learning was discussed. It was mentioned that it makes a difference what kind of attitude a line manager has towards learning, for example, how much line manager encourages the use of time for learning, how he or she speaks about it, and how he or she concretely expresses towards their employee. Having wrong expectations about the line manager’s attitude towards development and learning planning was clearly seen as a factor hindering success.

*“They [line managers] all remind us, OK, go to the Academy [name of Nokia’s former internal learning organization who owns the learning management systems in use], take some learnings, take some classes, if you ever see certain work-shops that may not be related to your but but you find them interesting please let us know...” (Interview 5)*

*“Line manager did not care and was not organizing or requiring PDP [personal development plan] updates” (ESBS7n)*

*“I often hear feedback, we have the PDPs [Personal development plans], and expectation is that they get the suggestion from line managers. Short, mid, long term...lot of people underestimate and they are waiting more to get the proposals than pro-actively think and plan their next steps.” (Interview 1)*

Most of the talented employees are in a situation where, due to their excellent performance, they are given business critical assignments, which may easily take most of their time. Nevertheless, even from this, they understand the importance of reserving the time for their own development and learning as no one else will do that for them. Nokia has an on-going campaign which recommends every employee to use 40 hours per year for different learning assignments for example taking an e-learning course. The implementation of this is mainly followed by the employee him or herself and therefore it is each individual's own choice to either utilize this opportunity or not. Talented employees had understood this as an opportunity.

*“Like I said that people needs to be willing to learn so like our company provides lot of kind of, you know, education resources, so I think very busy persons still keep on learning 40hours per year to do the training but lot of people kind of gives excuses that they are too busy to do that.” (Interview 2)*

Curiosity and thirst for knowledge were seen essential factors to strengthen own knowledge and skills. One old proverb crystallizes perfectly the importance of curiosity as it says that “The more you know, the more you know that you don't know”. This enforces oneself to examine the level of own knowledge and skills continuously. Without curiosity, many things might escape one's attention. Curiosity can be linked with the importance of communication as well, as especially when discussing the obstacles for success during the interview, the lack of communication came clearly visible.

*“Well I think that the kind of main trait which successful person should have is a curiosity maybe and the willingness to learn something new and also some communication skills.” (Interview 4)*

*“A lot of times it could be that they are not ambitious and they are not motivated. They are lacking the curiosity. Maybe they don’t communicate.” (Interview 5)*

## **5.2 Importance of co-operation and networking**

Understanding the importance of having a good team and targeting the results together as a team came up clearly from both positive and negative frame stories as well as from the interviews. Positive teamwork also stimulates high levels of creativity and innovation (Richardson & West 2010, 245). In one of the negative frame story, the respondent had drawn a picture of networking titling it as *“good networking skills are key for success”*. It is necessary to point out in this context that the frame story script mentioned Madeleine’s and Mike’s role as delivery capability manager. In this role, you need to co-operate closely between the operations functions and business unit to be capable to manage your role. So naturally, this is one of the reasons why especially networking was emphasized heavily. In addition, it is essential to notice that in a big company such as Nokia, quite many of the tasks are divided into smaller parts and therefore it is vital to co-operate, also virtually, with other people to gain results. Therefore communication skills are so vital.

*“Be a real team player since you cannot make it alone; only if you support others in their needs, the others will support your needs.” (ESBS4p)*

*“Madeleine asked continuously - “what are the comments from others about my proposal?” (ESBS9p)*

*“Madeleine has not realized that the key for success in DCM [delivery capability manager] Role is having good networking skills.” (ESBS12n)*

*“In a big company like Nokia, there is always good to have direct contact persons who know you personally, those contacts are key to get things done efficiently...” (ESBS2n)*

From the frame stories, it could be seen that networking and co-operation were seen important. Therefore, the role of networking and co-operation was discussed as a separate question in all of the interviews to get a deeper understanding of why it was

mentioned. Every interviewee agreed both ones to be important in order to be successful. Interviews helped to understand why these are crucial as for example it was highlighted that through co-operation, one is able to self-reflect on one's own skills and knowledge. Co-operation was especially explained to be an efficient method to learn new things from others. In addition, it was mentioned that cross-functional job roles, which are common in Nokia, require an employee to build a network so that tasks are completed on time and goals are reached. It was also mentioned that the need and level of the networking depends on the role, and therefore different roles require different kind of networking and co-operation. Five interviewees mentioned the necessity of soft-skills, such as communication skills, as they set the foundation to be capable to network and collaborate with others. In a big global company where colleagues might work globally in different sites, communicating virtually and understanding the requirements in cultural communication are essential.

*"Mike does not necessary have ability to build social networks inside company. Networking skills is very important when working with persons in many areas, departments, cultures, backgrounds." (ESBS6n)*

*"...where I was engaged in a project lead by a guy who completely lack the soft-skills and even of the idea was good the project totally failed just because the way the communication and the interaction was handled in the team..." (Interview 3)*

*"Are [co-operation and networking] are important because this is also the area where you can see the other areas and organizations where you can then improve your own skills and you can also share experiences with others. (Interview 1)*

*"When you have to deliver something and you have no proper support network you might not just be able to...if you have a network of people you hear also a lot more about the opportunities." (Interview 3)*

Significance of collaboration particularly from the listening point of view was highlighted especially in the interviews. Talented employees appreciated listening skills as through listening you become better aware of what others are doing and it will

widen your perspective. Achor (2013, 27) refers to researches who indicated that changing perspective in the workplace might support to achieve greater long-term growth. It can be seen that talented employees have assimilated this.

*“So first thing is like you ...hmm...collaboration with your colleagues...You must influence right, have influence on others so so...and you must work with different kind of people and if you don’t like to network with difficult people, it is hard for you at the end...So I think the influence already contain a fact that you know people are kind of willing to improve together with you together.”* (Interview 2)

*“I think they are good listeners”.* (Interview 2)

*“I think it is very important also to listen to other people because then you get the better understanding of what others are doing.”* (Interview 1)

*“Especially listening & relationships to other parties are one of my strengths.”*  
(ESBS8p)

*“I know that for example my colleagues they are not very interested in a work that other functions do, they are not interested on anything which is not part of their work and not listening those.”* (Interview 4)

### **5.3 Being brave and stepping out from comfort zone**

Challenging oneself and being brave to try to start new things were seen notable factors leading to success. Even when facing a new situation or task, willingness to try to work it out and step outside the comfort zone were mentioned as supporting success. Especially in the interviews it was emphasized that communicating and asking questions bravely, supports personal self-development and success.

*“It’s like, you know, you trust that you can do it and even you don’t have the skills maybe you go and try. That you are not afraid to start even you would be afraid that what it would be. You just start to do it...”* (Interview 4)

*“I see who were not afraid to go outside of comfort zone take on new challenges if they have no idea of the topic they really willing to learn and I think that is really common”.* (Interview 3)

*“I think it is very important to communicate and to ask questions and not to be afraid to ask questions and to meet people. I don’t know if some person, I don’t hesitate to come up and say “hi” if I have a question.”* (Interview 4)

Readiness to take on new challenges and seeing them as positive was also linked with success. This can be combined with personal factors such as being open-minded to changes and being optimistic. Positive thinking can be seen as an attitude towards things. For example, an employee cannot choose what will happen to him or her but he or she can choose how he reacts towards changes. Achor (2013, 10) named this kind of persons as positive geniuses.

*“You know, like, you know it is very challenging target set and it will be hard to push it through but you just start by doing small things, the again new small things and by that...it’s...like...things will come through.” (Interview 5)*

*“I have been anyway quite flexibility and taken also many kind of different small projects during normal PCC (=procurement capability creation) work...which is richness.” (ESBS3p)*

Comfort zone is a psychological place where a person feels safe and in control. According to Garcea et al. (2013, 310), development starts to happen when a person is outside of his or her comfort zone meaning, for example, starting to do a totally new thing or continuing to do an existing task in a different way. This zone is called the learning zone. Both the frame stories and the interviews showed that talented employees understand that it is necessary to step out of the comfort zone if you want to grow and develop yourself. This topic was asked separately in the interviews, and every interviewee agreed on this. In addition, through the interviews it could be understood that it is essential to differentiate a comfort zone from a situation which is inconvenient. If an employee operates in a situation which is uncomfortable for him or her, outcome could be damaging. Therefore, it is vital that the comfort zone does not feel unpleasant, as then development might not occur at all. When employees are given assignments which challenge them to grow, develop their strengths, and demand a high variety of skills, they are more likely to be successful. (Garcea et al. 2013, 329.)

*“I’ll say I partly agree with this because I also read some research that you if you go little bit outside of your comfort zone it helps you to be more productive but if you go too far it actually hurts...” (Interview 2)*

Fear and anxiety might be reasons which prevent an employee from stepping out from the comfort zone. It is natural for people to be reserved towards new things and stay in a situation which is safe and familiar. Learning zone is the area where an employee develops his existing skills and competences. According to Ambler (2015) this is the place where real learning and growth takes place. In addition, Ambler (2015) presents a third zone which is the danger zone, where employee is stretched too far and is too stressed. Development in danger zone is no longer positive. According to Uusiautti and Määttä (2015, 15), work involving the right amount of challenges can increase productivity and motivation.

Yerkes and Dodson (1908) were researching what kind of role anxiety plays in performance. Their study revealed that people perform best at intermediate levels of stimulations, and that performance is lower at high or low levels of arousal. (Yerkes & Dodson 1908). This proves that a small amount anxiety actually supports the development and therefore stepping out from the comfort zone is vital for growth.

*“If you become one or you are on the way to become a top performer, you know, it’s always people who I see who were not afraid to go outside of comfort zone take on new challenges and if they have no idea of the topic they were really willing to learn and I think that is really common.” (Interview 3)*

*“Taking the changes and forcing myself outside from my comfort zone looked also a little bit scary...” (ESBS11n)*

#### **5.4 Positive attitude and passion to do things**

Having confidence in the future and making most of the opportunities were indicated as factors leading to success. Thinking positively and not giving up even in challenging situations were observed to support to help gaining success. Readiness to do tasks, even the ones that are maybe not the nicest and easiest ones, can be seen as a conducive factor in gaining success.

*"Willingness to learn all the time, give development proposals, never give up, challenge status quo, finding passion from the sometimes routine work, taking responsibility of own work, do what you promise, suitable self-confidence: if you stay in your comfort zone it can regress person." (ESBS5n)*

*"Passionate to everything I start; always concentrate to do my best." (ESBS4p)*

Uusiautti and Määttä (2015, 14) also state that people who want to develop and seize opportunities in life can be seen as following a positive strategy. Studies in positive psychology have revealed that when individuals' strengths are identified and actions are built on those, the individuals tend to feel better about themselves and people around them (Hodges & Asplund 2013, 215-219). Therefore, this can be, in a way, set as a pre-requisite for becoming successful.

*"I think that's very important and that is also indication that you are successful in your job because if you enjoy it and then you get motivation from it to really get up and work and be happy about it." (Interview 3)*

*"If you just think that no no that this and that will never not work. That you know you just right from the start think that it will not fly in these circumstances you will never success." (Interview 5)*

Seligman (2011, 80) has discussed the importance of teaching well-being at school, as according to him, positive mood which is the outcome of well-being, produces broader attention, more creative and holistic thinking. This is in contrast to a negative



feeling which produces narrowed attention, more critical and analytical thinking. Being happy and having a good feeling at work were mentioned as pre-requisites to success.

*“I would say that I would think still success at work if I go to work being kind of happy and getting motivation from it right.” (Interview 3)*

Having a suitable balance between work and family is beneficial for both employee and organization. Therefore, recent studies have shifted their focus from an emphasis on the conflict between work and family on the positive benefits between these two (Baltes, Clark & Chakrabarti 2013, 201, 209). Especially when discussing the obstacles for work success, the un-balance between work and personal life were mentioned.

*“I think when it comes more to the individual facts that maybe the work-life balance is not perfect could be a topic and that employee is not feeling well.” (Interview 1)*

*“Mike’s civil life: Sleep, rest, eating healthy, hobbies, family situation or own or close person’s health are not ok anymore. One or whole bunch of problems outside work can reflect to success at work.” (ESBS10n)*

Uusiautti & Määttä (2015, 7) point out that goals play an important role in success, as when goals are met, people tend to feel good which affects one’s emotions and life satisfaction. Therefore, the role of feelings cannot be underestimated, as they are, in a way, basis for everything; if an employee is feeling good, he or she is most probably performing well also. Meaningful work is believed to improve work motivation and performance. The following passage from an interview captures this well:

*“He’s happy (laughing), happy because he sees the results of his work, he sees that he’s valued, and I think it’s kind of a circle you know, you work hard, you get accepted, you are valued, you are happy, you work hard... You must get appreciation that you are needed.”...So I would say he’s happy, he’s confident. And he’s valued.” (Interview 6)*

## 5.5 Conducting your own development and being proactive

This study demonstrates that talented employees themselves see the success as something which they can themselves influence. Almost all the reasoning leading to success can be linked to actions which employees can influence. Understanding the importance of taking lead one's personal development is one of the key factors which enable continuous development and growth.

*"I guess the main advice that I should give to myself, is that, if you see any significant changes regarding in your own work (impacting results, motivation, overall wellbeing etc.), dare to take immediate actions." (ESBS13p)*

*"A lot of times like, the many of us, they sort of through back that responsibility (learning and development) on to the manager, or to the job or to the organization where they are like, Ok, we are doing the job if they need to help build the way to their development. And lot of times lot of times actually that's the wrong way. You need to take care of your learning and development. Because you need to know what you supposed to be doing and what you need to learn. Because you need to know what you are not good about and what you need to develop." (Interview 5)*

Self-efficacy means person's confidence in his or her own capabilities, for example, to complete a task or reach a certain goal. Person is also able to regulate his or her behavior. (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 13.) Many of the things talented employees brought up are in linkage to self-efficacy as when you have the trust to manage some task or situation, you most probably start to work on it also. If you have a poor self-efficacy, it affects your decisions and actions and therefore might be preventing success. Achor (2013, 11) is also talking about self-efficacy but illustrating it a bit differently: *"Success, then, is not just about how much intelligence you have; it's about how much of your intelligence you believe you can use."*

*"I noticed, unfortunately too late, that I should have gained more experience on the activities and roles outside my own organization. Perhaps, focusing on personal development and pro-actively developing some new skills (process improvement,*

*data analysis, and project management tools) would have helped to organize the work better and keep the workload in a meaningful level." (ESBS10n)*

In addition, setting one-self high-expectations was interpreted from the data. Especially from the frame stories, it could be observed that talented employees were conscious of the need to set high enough targets, also in their career life, to ensure improvements in their way of working and learning new things. Lack of persistence and self-control were seen as factors which may prevent success as without them you may lose the interest and power to reach your goals.

*"Now he needs to decide for a future position on a 'leader role' or 'expert role'. He will go for the leader role since there are more options to climb-up than in the expert role." (ESBS3p)*

*"He didn't have a self-discipline to accomplish on daily basis so that he could achieve his goal." (ESBS15n)*

*"You know if you don't keep on pushing the things even though they are not working at first time, you can't reach your targets. Just push and push and don't give up." (Interview 2)*

*"I never actually thought about setting long term goals for my personal development as I expected this to be a responsibility of my line manager..." (ESBS2n)*

Being proactive, keeping promises, and completing tasks in time were mentioned as success factors. Pro-activeness was linked to situations where, for example, an employee is ready to start promoting something actively without even having the full knowledge or skills in place. Taking an active role and being eager to do a task were seen important factors.

*"Sometimes people spent a lot time to discuss who should take the lead or who should be responsible for what instead of doing it. While I think to make things done is more important even you may do more than requested." (ESBS9p)*

*“For example for pro-activeness that you are active and this is something which I mentioned to willingness to learn for example if you have large amount of workload and you still willing to go out to learn something new this is kind of proactive and also willingness to go outside of comfort zone.” (Interview 2)*

*“Always keep on your promises; only when you have got the reputation of being 100% reliable you will be selected for the most interesting and/or important projects.” (ESBS3p)*

The frame stories indicated that clarities in roles and responsibilities might hinder success but this finding was not fully supported in the interviews as it was highlighted that there is always complexity and an employee needs to overcome those by being active and demanding clarification if something is not clear.

*“To be truthful, nothing is crystal clear. It is very important to communicate with your stakeholders what are the expectations.” (Interview 3)*

The importance of giving and receiving feedback was mentioned in both the frame stories and during the interviews. Especially in the interviews, the role of feedback in supporting personal growth and development was highlighted. Talented employees were aware that if they did not receive feedback, they could actively ask for it, for example, from their line managers or peers. By doing so, talented employees tried to strengthen their capabilities of self-efficacy.

*“That we [line managers] make a regular feedback sessions” & if they [employees] really accepts also the kind of feedback to share the reflections” (Interview 1)*

*“Yeah, regular feedback. Feedback and also when someone recognize his results and achievements...that’s kind of thing.” (Interview 2)*

*“A lot of times, if I need to improve in something, I either ask the feedback or I openly get the feedback from my team. So that’s how I know if I’m being successful in my work or if I need to improve.” (Interview 5)*

## 5.6 Understanding the operational environment and the big picture

Working in an operational environment which is big and complex, it is often perceived as a challenge to have the capability to understand, for example, how one's own work and doing is linked to the overall picture. For example, Nokia has wide organizational structures and process landscapes, so it is important that an employee understands his or her own responsibility and how it correlates to others and fits in the overall picture. This study showed that especially when describing the possible obstacles preventing success, this area came up.

*"...she didn't quite see the big picture and understand the big picture – what all she was considered as responsible for." (ESBS5n)*

*"She gets along with the team and knew working process and contacts quite well so she agreed..." (ESBS8p)*

*"Permanently analyze and understand the "Big picture"; this helps you to measure the value of contribution and opens your mind for innovative ideas and further development." (ESBS4p)*

Organizational changes were also mentioned as possible obstacles preventing success. Regular organizational changes are normal in Nokia and employees need to have abilities to cope with those. It is easier to work in a changing environment if you have the capabilities to understand the big picture, for example, the high-level organizational set up and processes. It is easier for an employee to operate in an environment where changes happen rapidly, if an employee is aware of the environment and events around. Therefore, if an employee does not actively try to widen his or her perspective on things it might be too narrowed. This then might lead to a situation that an employee might not have the needed skills in place when change has already happened.

*“One day, organization set-up changed totally, and Madeleine had to start with totally new products and new people, and safe and familiar mode of operation was totally gone.” (ESBS14n)*

*“Then there was a re-organization. Her tasks were mapped to other team / LM (=line manager). He did not know her capabilities so far and organization...” (ESBS11n)*

*“..this case my curiosity interested in this topic and it helped me to understand what F&C (=finance and control) person was explaining because I was touched in this topic before as I wanted to understand it even it's not mandatory I mean what is happening around and everything was quite clear what she was saying but other colleagues who have never touched it or interested on it they were totally lost so and this case I think curiosity and my curiosity what's happening around of my organization helped me to have a better understanding” (Interview 4)*

*“Madeleine has not understood that one of the key drivers in DCM work is customer satisfaction.” (ESBS5n)*

One of the negative frame stories brought up the aspect that under-performing might be caused by a situation where an employee has not been trained officially on the standard processes and guidelines. This could lead to a situation where partly incorrect guidance's are given which also affect on not understanding the big picture and one's own contribution on it properly enough. This is also in relation with the importance of good induction process, for example, to newcomers or employees changing position inside the company. Importance of induction came up clearly visible from the negative frame stories. According to Helsilä & Salojärvi (2009, 138), essential purpose of induction is to guide and support new employee's capability to manage work independently. The line manager is usually the person mainly responsible person during the induction but usually organizations nominate, for example, a colleague to oversee the induction process (Helsilä & Salojärvi 2009, 138). It is been suggested a good idea to define ending date for induction when it would be good to

evaluate what has been achieved and if there would be any additional needs. Some form or process would support this. (Helsilä & Salojärvi 2009, 140.)

*“Induction is essential to start smoothly in new responsibility area. Work description might not be written or communicated and Mike does not understand it.”*  
(ESBS10n)

*“Now a days Madeleine herself has her vicious and her natural knowledge also contributes to the low performance and difficulties to accomplish in total her expected responsibility, as she never understood the E2” (=end to end) of her responsibilities. She was not aware of what kind of induction there was or was there any in reality.”* (ESBS14n)

## 5.7 Being open-minded for change

When varying the frame stories, it was definite that importance of having abilities to cope with changes is crucial to gain success. Adler's (1982) eight elements of competence, described in chapter 2.1, can be seen in close linkage to resilience. Having a strong self-concept, being able to function internationally and having capabilities to control different feelings, transfer from development stage to another, survive from stressful situations, owning capabilities to gain certain resources which one may need at certain point of life, and having cognitive skills supports to cope and live in a constantly changing environment. These capabilities help to have a positive outlook on work and looking to the future rather than the past.

*“..willing to change and willing to learn is a bit like you know around this comfort zone but being open-minded I think it's really important to taking into account that you know things might be happening differently or people are different...”* (Interview 4)

*“ Madeleine was trusting herself and even though project frames changes all the time, she was trusting that all will be fine but hard-work is needed.”* (ESBS9p)

*“Sometimes she longed for the other type of job – something more precisely defined and which would have clear assignments and frames, instead of constant uncertainty and problem solving as in DCM work.”* (ESBS7n)

*“Lack of determination, he didn’t make a clear commitment to achieve what he need to deliver.” (ESBS2n)*

*“It’s like you will accept it even if not from right from the start but you don’t block it at the beginning, you give time you know and you start to think about it that yeah, this might be good direction for us and why not to try” (Interview 5)*

*“Always keeps [un-successful employee] the old methods [working habits] and not willing to change. (Interview 2)*

## **5.8 Competence and leadership development**

Talented employees had different kind of earlier experiences, both through studies and work. The youngest employee, 24 year old, had experiences of studying abroad starting already from an early childhood. Employees who had worked for Nokia over 15 years, had experiences of working in different organizations and in different roles. Earlier experiences were seen significant as they were mentioned to provide perspective to notice and analyze things at workplace. Earlier experiences were seen more important than education. This was separately discussed during the interviews. The role of the education was seen important but it was not highlighted as much as the competences and skills gained from experiences.

*“After Mike’s job change to Nokia he gathered experience in three different positions during his last eight years. He was working outside and inside of Global Operations organization to get familiar with the different areas of the company.” (ESBS3p)*

*“I have been working in a very much similar role and with the same group of people and stakeholders.” (ESBS15n)*

*“I noticed, unfortunately too late, that I should have gained more experience on the activities and roles outside of my own organization.” (ESBS6n)*



In addition, role of childhood experiences were mentioned in one of the interviews. Uusiautti and Määttä (2015, 87-88) in their studies also pointed out that learnt elements during childhood are helping to assist further work success.

*“Well, I think...well..I don’t know, it’s becoming more psychological. I mean...I consider how my mum was when I was a little, she was always kind of inspired of me, she was always telling me that you can do it, You can make it, you are the best, and I think for the kid that is very important, to again, to see that you are good, that someone is telling you this, that someone is telling you the feedback.” (Interview 6)*

Talented employees described that it is both individuals and company’s benefit when an employee is doing the work he or she has the needed competences for and is willing to do. Competences can be developed but certain characteristics need to be in place to gain success. This aspect came out especially in the interviews where the role of competences and resilience was asked separately. Lack of competences affects on performance for sure and therefore, it was highlighted that an employee should have the required competences in place which can be then further developed when needed. Resilience as a concept was not familiar to four of the interviewees but when the meaning was explained, every interviewee highlighted the importance of resilience especially by reflecting the current changes at Nokia. Interviewees expressed that talented employees need to be capable to integrate difficult experiences in their lives in a way that they can learn from those and continue for better. This is exactly what the meaning of resilience is. In addition, as mentioned, the importance of leadership competences came out clearly as concrete examples were given to highlight the importance of strong leadership.

*“Maybe this comes to this career selection. What we need is to think about is if person is strategic leader, line manager or for example project manager. So this is an area where lack of competences comes important...different competences are needed for line managers and project managers. We have not managed this well in the past. We might have, they are great experts but they are not good leaders.” (Interview 1)*

*“If line manager is not really putting effort to his task of being there for the team.”*  
(Interview 2)

Importance of leadership was especially highlighted in two of the interviews and the meaning of leadership was taken up in the frame stories. Richardson and West (2010, 244) say that a team leader is the most visible and powerful member of a team. This study revealed that at some point, power of the leadership is under-estimated. When describing leaders' role, Richardson & West (2010, 244) points out leaders' responsibility is to provide information and feedback to employees, structure the work environment and develop roles. According to Steger & Dik (2013, 138), communicating vision clearly is positively related to employee performance, well-being, and meaning derived from work. They also emphasize that leadership abilities benefit both individuals and organizations. Therefore, constant connection between line manager and employee is important to ensure that a relationship may develop and both parties know each other well.

*“Line manager needs to take the time, of course employee as well but here line manager is the driver that development discussions are kept on time and that line manager is interested how her team is doing and what they have on their mind.”*

(Interview 4)

*“Line manager is not caring and not taking the time if employee has challenges.”*

(Interview 5)

*“If line manager is not giving the feedback and employee is not having the courage to ask it.”* (Interview 6)

## **6 SUMMARY OF RESULTS**

To summarize, figure 5 visualizes how work success appeared in this study. Study revealed that workplace and employee related factors effects on how work success was experienced. Success at work was transpired as a subjective work experience forming in a certain context. One of the most essential research areas in social psychology is social interaction. This social interaction can be considered as a connecting factor between workplace and employee when pre-requisites and obstacles for work success are in question. These main findings are presented in figure 5.

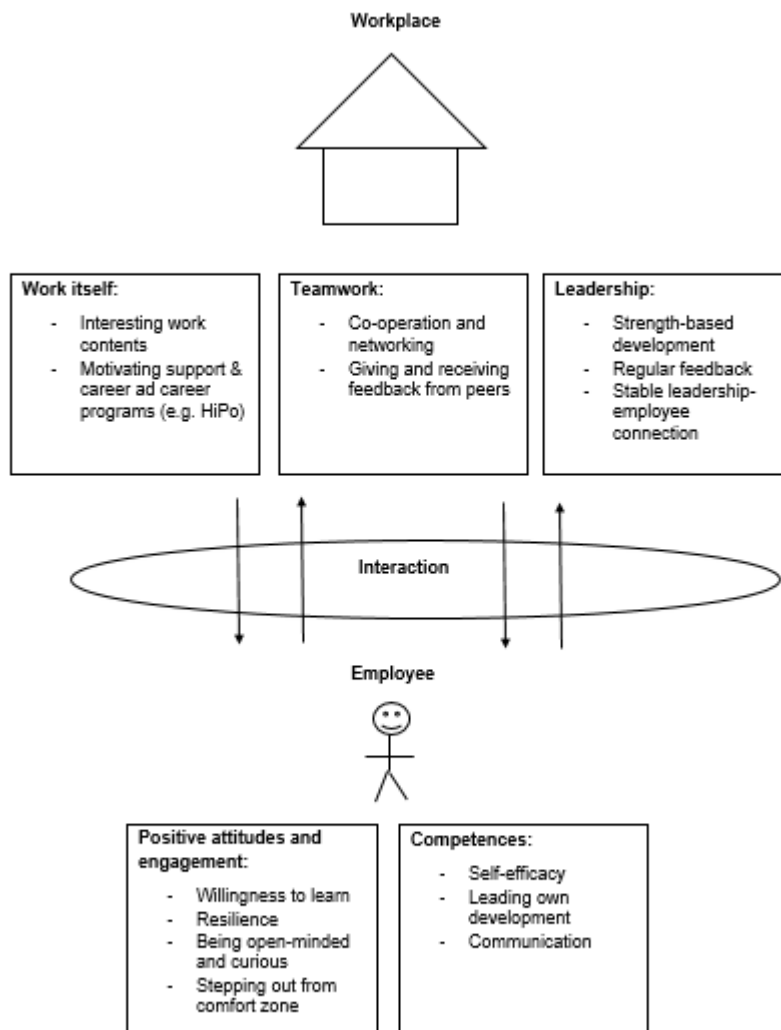


Figure 5 Success at work as a subjective work experience

One of the main connective pre-requisite among the talented employees was that their reality is constructed in a way that they perceive the possibility where success factors are possible to occur. Therefore, it could be said that they share in this context the same reality. In addition, they understand themselves as active players who

have the power to see surroundings positively and change them. This is in tight relation to the Achor's (2013, 1-3) definition of positive genius in which Achor (2013) means a person who has the capability to see the reality in a way where success is possible.

Achor (2013, xiii) has stated, *"If you want to change your life, you first have to change your reality."* In this context, Achor (2013, 26-27 & 36-42) speaks also about the vantage points by which he means the points from which you observe the facts you will use to create your reality. Capability to utilize different vantage points provides versatile possibilities. Achor (2013, 26) refers to studies which have shown that utilizing only one vantage point at work prevents forward movement. Findings of this study fully support this statement as all the talented employees shared this view.

Another of the pre-requisites were curiosity, being open-minded for change and being constantly willing to learn new things. Stairs & Galpin (2013, 161-162) have cited researches that indicated that people who work hard to develop their skills and learn new things, were more satisfied with their lives. People who do meaningful work, are likely more engaged than those who are not. This study proved that talented employees agreed with this statement as they emphasized that feeling good and being happy set the bases for success. As a summary, despite of the age, gender, and the working years in Nokia, common pre-requisite for work success was passion towards work, willingness to develop and learn new skills and competences, and being curious and open-minded for change.

Self-efficacy was seen as a common pre-requisite. Urdan and Turner (2005, 301) refers to individuals' judgements of their capabilities to perform specific tasks in specific situations. Talented employees were highly trusting that they were able to manage a certain task which indicates that they own strong self-efficacy beliefs. Mroz and Quinn (2013, 253) are also convinced that self-efficacy relates to higher goal setting and motivation.

Passiveness, lack of motivation and lack of co-operation and networking were indicated as obstacles preventing success. Lack of competences were not directly seen as obstacle as it was stated especially in the interviews that competences and skills can be developed but lack of communication skills and capabilities to network and collaborate with others could be indirectly seen factors hindering success. Lack of resilience, especially un-willingness to change, and to cope with change were highlighted in each of the frame stories and interviews. Therefore, it can be stated that a major obstacle of success is resisting change.

The study indirectly revealed that lack of motivation might be the major obstacle preventing success. Motivation was seen as fundamental and prerequisite for any learning to take place. Talented employees seemed to be motivated as they saw opportunities in the company and felt they were able to lead their own development, growth and work. They had worked in several different positions and felt greater levels of responsibility. These factors are the satisfiers defined in Herzberg's (1959) motivation-theory, described in chapter 2.2. Satisfiers are the factors that make people happy and challenge people to develop talents and fulfill potential. Hence, it can be concluded that talented employees in this study were happy with on the satisfiers they had.

To connect the findings to a larger context, it can be argued that pre-requisites leading to success are in linkage to work engagement. Stairs & Galpin's (2013) engagement drivers such as enjoyment, challenge and meaning for work, could be clearly indicated from the study, as talented employees highlighted the importance of liking and enjoying what they are doing and that work itself is challenging enough so that it motivates for further development. Third aspect, having the relevance of the work and feeling happy were both recognized and from that part, strengthened the idea of positive recurrent cycle of work, success and happiness. Figure 1 was created by utilizing Achor (2013) and Uusiautti & Määttä (2013) views on how work, happiness and success is related to each other's. (Figure 1)

It is necessary to notice that success factors conjoined in frame stories were connected to the expectations to the role of delivery capability, which was mentioned in the frame script. This is natural but of course might have had an effect on what was mentioned as success or non-success factors. Due to this, it can be stated that success factors are being mirrored to role expectations.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

When speaking about the different characteristics within qualitative research, Creswell (2014, 186) highlights the target of trying to develop a complete picture of the problem under the study. He uses the term *holistic account*, which describes the importance of targeting to take into account multiple perspectives and sketching the larger picture that emerges when making analyses and conclusions. This was the aim of this study as well; to understand and bring it to both individual's and organization's consciousness how work success is seen and experienced in Nokia. In addition, this study strengthened the findings of earlier similar studies where work success has been seen as multidimensional, subjective and context related phenomena (Uusiautti & Määttä 2015, 3, 9 & Uusiautti 2015, 127-133).

This study was unique and described the work success from the viewpoint of talented employees who were deliberately chosen for this study. On that account, it is noteworthy to consider how the findings would have been different or similar if the focus group would have been different. In addition, it is reasonable to reflect how much, if at all, selection to HiPo or IGTP-program has affected employee's self-efficacy, which was one of the pre-requisite indicated for work success. Role of identifying and supporting the employee's potential for example via HiPo-program was not visible directly but it was clear that all the talented employees appreciated both of

these programs and especially through interviews their appreciation and their pride of being part of those could be heard. Therefore, it could be noted that programs have strengthened employees positive work engagement.

As mentioned in the introduction of this study, today's companies share the interest to recruit top talents in a global marketplace. Employees are seeking the type of work which is interesting and meaningful for them and where they can be engaged, and continuously learn, develop, and grow. The role of an employee engagement is important but it is becoming even more vital in the future. Therefore, it is crucial for organizations to understand the factors behind and linked into it, and work success as a concept gives one suitable standpoint.

The findings of this study seem to support earlier research results about the connection between success and happiness. According to Uusiautti and Määttä (2015, 128), when people are feeling and experiencing positive things and have willingness to use their strengths, they are also feeling happy. Out from the data it could be concluded that success is linked with happiness and things for which an individual can affect. This reveals the power of strength-based development where individual's strengths should be developed as using them most likely brings a good feeling. According to Hodges and Asplund (2013, 214), talents come into existence naturally and cannot be acquired in the way person can develop skills and knowledge. Therefore, it is important that employees are able to utilize their strengths in the work they do. Having people in their right places doing the work they enjoy sets the bases for work engagement (Harter & Blacksmith 2013, 126). Therefore, we can consider that employees are more likely to be engaged to assignments and roles which match their skills, competences, motivation drivers, and values. This study suggests that this finding should be noted also during the hiring process, and when recruiting, the recruiter should pay attention to characteristics that are parallel for both individual and organization.



This study encourages Nokia to continue in the current direction of utilizing strength based methods, such as StrengthFinder2.0 and 360 coaching, and keep on exploring actively new suitable strength-based methods to support employees' awareness of their strengths. This requires engagement as well as education for line and top management to ensure they are capable to provide the needed support to employees and leverage their inherent talents (Harter & Blacksmith 2013, 126). As one of the results in this study indicated, talented employees shared similar kind of reality of how they are seeing the world and work itself and different possibilities it has to offer. It could be considered by an organization if these kind of talented employees could be utilized even more than today not only by offering them development paths but also positioning them also to support development of others. Existing methods, such as coaching, mentoring or shadowing could be used more heavily. This would also strengthen the co-operation and networking skills of both parties. By doing so, viewpoints, experiences and beliefs are being shared and changed between employees and this could leverage the positive engagement among the organization. This proposal is based on the mirroring technique used in psychology where one imitates speech patterns, attitudes and gestures but should be studied deeper to be capable to give more structured proposals (Hari et al. 2015, 71).

The importance of feedback should be remembered and as Ruohomäki (2015, 389) suggests, personnel should be encouraged to ask regular feedback. In their conclusions of what the elements of building positive organizations are, Garcea et al. (2013, 329-300) discuss the importance of celebrating good work together in the workplaces and they raise the value of providing regular and timely feedback. This study proposes the organization to evaluate whether personnel has the needed capabilities in place to give and receive feedback and if there should be any training to be considered.

A clear tendency could be seen in especially in the negative frame stories. In those stories talented employees wrote, without pre-assigned instructions, suggestions that how employee who has challenges to accomplish his/her tasks, should start to

do things differently to become successful. This also demonstrates that talented employees feel the ownership of own active learning and development.

All the employees who were invited for an interview accepted the invite and they had positive attitude towards the interview and the study. Participants shared their high interest towards this study and couple of them even mentioned separately that interview questions made them realize how complex and challenging phenomena work success is. It is also necessary to point out that most of the interviewees had difficulties to describe unsuccessful employee which leads to a question whether it is necessary to define success at work first for yourself before you are able to describe what success is and how to distinguish a successful employee from a non-successful. One observation done during the interviews supports this as all interviewees mentioned they either needed some time to think before answering or their way of narrating revealed they were at the same time thinking about the topic maybe for the first time in this particular context.

Twenge and Campbell (2013, 33) see that generational differences will be important aspect of diversity in today's workplaces especially once Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964) will get retired and majority of workforce is Generation Me aka Generation Y, Millennials, or iGen (born 1980-2000). Leadership styles may need to become more democratic and younger generation requires more flexibility and more guidance and mentoring to support their career path. This sets new expectations to line managers and whole organizations. In addition, younger generations have higher locus of control and therefore organizations need to discover ways to motivate employees (Twenge and Campbell 2013, 33). In this study, motivation was one of the common factor setting foundations for many of the pre-requisites mentioned, such as willingness to learn, being curious and pro-active. Therefore, it would be important to understand the employee-related motivation satisfiers better from the perspective of Generation Y especially. Kultalahti (2015, 49) points out in her dissertation that it is important to understand role of human resources (HR) function and human resources management (HRM) as their practices play a critical role in attracting and retaining

employees. Their role is also important when it comes to Generation Y, as concerns have been raised in several studies over Millennials' willingness to commit to organizations. Understanding the needs and viewpoints of Generation Y would support to understand how young people differ from their processors. In addition, further study proposals could focus on researching what kind of role age plays in how work success is seen and experienced. It would be interesting to conduct a cross-cultural study so that cultural differences and similarities could be understood better. Understanding the cultural aspects deeper would be useful especially to large and global companies, such as Nokia presented in this study. In addition to these, it would be beneficial from organizations point of view to consider what are the methods from company perspective to support employees' satisfiers, which are the strong motivators.

It is reasonable and philosophical to consider how much facts and thoughts shared by the participants of this study are learned and how much of them are authentic thoughts. Of course, there are no answers to this question but it is reasonable to note, as human feelings, attitudes and values set the foundation for actions and behaviors. Therefore, it is understandable that empathy-based methods collected data produces stereotypes, as stereotypes support us to structure our lives and capabilities to understand and give reasons for different kind of things. Eskola (1998, 334) is questioning that, as stereotypes are part of our everyday life, what bad there would be if those were part the outcome of empathy-based research. I agree with this, as what exists in real in person's life is also one of the main targets academic research tries to understand.

Majority of the study participants expressed their interest towards this study and expressed that it was at the same time, very interesting and challenging for them to consider what success really is. Hence, it can be said that it was a good exercise and a revelation for them and hopefully will raise some good thoughts later on as well. One of the interviewed captured it nicely:

*“Ok, that’s gonna be a question that I’m going to think this evening when drinking a tea or wine or whatever that is...yeahh...I mean it’s so, I will probably think it over the next few days much more.” (Interview 3)*

Creating this study has been a memorable journey for me and has brought me closer to myself and challenged me to think what the reality from which I view success is. Therefore, studying success at work could bring new viewpoints to organizations and support to understand better the different elements linked into it which further supports to develop the organizations and their personnel. This was the main contribution of this study to provide new viewpoints and perspectives to work engagement in the light of work success to Nokia. These findings provides a new foundation to employees, management and HR to have a further discussions on topics relevant to positive work engagement and motivation factors. For example, figure 5 describing the work success, could be used as such as a part of the development discussions by an employee and line manager and within the process when developing the development discussion concept by HR.

Personally, this journey has strengthened my belief of success being closely linked to happiness as I feel that:

*“Success is when you gain something which is important to you. Something you’ve put energy and all the effort you can. And it comes truth at the time when you write last sentences to your thesis study and you are feeling proud of the whole process you’ve experienced, the outcome and the good feeling inside of you. Kind of happiness, I’d say <3”*

## References

- Achor, S. (2013). *Before happiness. The 5 hidden keys to achieving success, spreading happiness, and sustaining positive change*. New York, NY: Crown Business.
- Adler, P. T. (1982). An analysis of the concept of competence in individuals and social systems. *Community Mental Health Journal* 18(2), 34 - 45.
- Ambler, G. (2015). *Helping leaders grow*. Retrieved from: <http://www.georgeambler.com/leadership-develops-when-you-escape-your-comfort-zone/>
- Baltes, B. B., Clark, M. A., Chakrabarti, M. 2013. Work-life balance: the roles of work-family conflict and work-family facilitation. In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work* (pp. 201-212). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Battistelli, A., Galletta, M., Portoghese, I., & Vandenberghe, C. (2013). Mindsets of commitment and motivation: interrelationships and contribution to work outcomes. *The Journal of Psychology* 147(1), 17-48.
- Barendsen, L., & Gardner, H. (2013). Good for what? The young worker in a global age. In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea. N. (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work*. New York (pp. 301-311). US: Oxford University Press.
- Cascio, W. F. (2013). The Changing World of Work. In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work*. New York (pp. 13-24). US: Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design – Choosing Among Five Traditions*. Thousand Oaks, California, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, & mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, & mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Elliot, A. J., & Dweck C. S. (2005). *Handbook of competence and motivation*. New York, NY & London: The Guilford Press.
- Eskola, J. (1997). *Eläytymismenetelmäopas*. [Guidebook to empathy based methods] Tampere: Tampereen yliopisto.

Eskola, J. (1998). *Eläytymismenetelmä sosiaalitutkimuksen tiedonhankintamenetelmänä*. [Empathy based method as data collection method in social science] Tampere: TAJU.

Eskola, J., & Suoranta, J. (1998). *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. [Introduction to qualitative research] Tampere: Vastapaino Oy.

Eskola, J., & Suoranta, J. (2000). *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. [Introduction to qualitative research] Tampere: Vastapaino Oy.

Eskola, J., & Suoranta, J. (2005). *Johdatus laadulliseen tutkimukseen*. [Introduction to qualitative research] Tampere: Vastapaino Oy.

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. *Työhyvinvointi*. [Well-being at work] (2016). Retrieved from <http://www.ttl.fi/fi/tyohyvinvointi/tuottavuus/sivut/default.aspx>.

Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. *Learning during changes*. (2015) Retrieved from [http://www.ttl.fi/en/organization\\_management/managing\\_and\\_developing\\_change/learning\\_during\\_changes/pages/default.aspx](http://www.ttl.fi/en/organization_management/managing_and_developing_change/learning_during_changes/pages/default.aspx)

Frese, M. (2009). The changing nature of work. In N. Chmiel (Ed.) *An Introduction to Work and Organizational Psychology. A European Perspective* (pp. 397-413). USA: Malden (Mass.): Blackwell.

Flick, U. (2014). *An introduction to qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case Study. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 301-316). Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore, and Washington D.C: Sage Publications.

Galletta, A. (2012). *Mastering the Semi-Structured Interview and Beyond. From Research Design to Analysis and Publication*. New York, NY: New York University.

Garcea, N., Harrington, S. & Linley, P. A. (2013). Building Positive Organizations. In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work* (pp. 323-333). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Gardner, G. (1977). Is there a valid test of Herzberg's two-factor theory? *Journal of occupational Psychology*, 3(50), 197–204.

Golafshani, N. (2003). Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4), 597–607.

Grönfors, M. (2011). *Laadullisen tutkimuksen kenttätömenetelmät*. [Fieldwork of qualitative reserach] Hämeenlinna: SoFia Vilkkä.

Halttunen, K. (2003). *Scaffolding performance in IR instruction: exploring learning experiences and performance in two learning environments*. Tampere: University of Tampere.

Hari, R., Järvinen, J., Lehtonen, J., Lonka, K., Peräkylä, A., Pyysiäinen, I., Salenius, S., Sams, M., & Ylikoski, P. (2015). *Ihmisen mieli*. [The human mind] Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

Harter, J. K., & Blacksmith, N. (2013). Employee Engagement and the Psychology of Joining, Staying and Leaving Organizations. In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work* (pp. 121-142). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Herzberg, F., Mausner, B., & Syderman, B.B. (1959). *Motivation to work*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Helsilä, M., & Salojärvi, S. (2009). *Strategisen henkilöstöjohtamisen käytännöt*. [The practicalities of strategic human resource management] Hämeenlinna: Kariston Kirjapaino.

Hirsjärvi, S., Remes, P., & Sajavaara, P. (1997). *Tutki ja kirjoita*. [Research and write] Helsinki: Kirjayhtymä Oy.

Hirsjärvi, S., & Hurme, H. (2008). *Tutkimushaastattelu- teemahaastattelun teoria ja käytäntö*. [Research interview – theory and practice of semi-structured interview] Helsinki: Gaudeamus Helsinki University Press.

Hodges, T. D., & Asplund, J. (2013). Strengths Development in the Workplace. In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work* (pp. 213–220). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Hätönen, H. (2000). *Osaava henkilöstö – nyt ja tulevaisuudessa*. [Skilled personnel – now and in the future] Vantaa: Metalliteollisuuden Kustannus Oy.

Jokinen, T. (2004). *Global leadership competencies: a review and discussion*. Vaasa: University of Vaasa.

Kanfer, R., & Ackerman, P. L. (2005). Work Competence – A person-Oriented Perspective. In A. J. Elliot & C. S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of Competence and Motivation* (pp.336-352). New York, NY & London: The Guilford Press.

Kirk, J. L., & Miller, M. (1986). *Reliability and validity in qualitative research*. Beverly Hills, California, CA: Sage Publications.

Koski-Heikkinen, A. (2013). *Ammatillisen opettajan identiteetti ja auktoriteetti – Ammatilliset opettajat ja opiskelijat ideaalia ammatillista opettajuutta etsimässä*. [The vocational education teacher's identity and authority: vocational education

teachers and students searching for ideal teacherhood in vocational education] Rovaniemi: Lapin yliopisto.

Kultalahti, S. (2015). *“It’s so nice to be at work!” Adopting different perspectives in understanding generation Y at work.* Vaasa: University of Vaasa.

Kyllönen, P. C. (2013). Soft skills for the workplace. *Change*, 45(6), 16-23.

Lee, Y. T. (2010). Exploring high-performers’ required competencies. *Expert Systems with Applications* 37(1), 434–439.

LinkedIn. (2016). *LinkedIn Jobs*. Retrieved from:  
[https://www.linkedin.com/job/home?trk=nav\\_responsive\\_sub\\_nav\\_jobs](https://www.linkedin.com/job/home?trk=nav_responsive_sub_nav_jobs)

Manka, M-L. (2007). *Työrauhan julistus. Miten olla ihmisiksi alaisena ja esimiehenä.* [Declaration of work harmony. How to behave as a subordinate and manager] Helsinki: Kirjapaja.

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396.

McKim, C. A. (2015). The value of mixed methods research: a mixed methods study. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1–21.

McIntosh, M. J., & Morse, J. M. (2015). Situating and constructing diversity in semi-structured Interviews. *Global Qualitative Nursing Research*, (2), 1–12.

Metsämuuronen, J. (2006) (Ed.). *Laadullisen tutkimuksen käsikirja.* [The handbook of qualitative reserach] Helsinki: International Methelp.

Mroz, D., & Quinn, S. (2013). Positive organizational scholarship leaps into the worlds of work? In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work* (pp. 251-264). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

O’Neil, H. F. (2014). (Ed.) *Workforce readiness. Competencies and assessment.* UK: Psychology Press.

Popli, S., & Rizvi, I. A. (2016). Drivers of employee engagement: the role of leadership style. *Global Business Review* 17(4), 1–15.

Richardson, J., & West, M. A. (2010). Engage work teams. In S. L. Albrecht (Ed.), *Handbook of employee engagement* (pp. 323-340). Cheltenham (UK): Edward Elgar. Publishers.

Ruohotie, P. (1997). Kokemus on paras opettaja – jos vain otamme oppia siitä. [Experience is the best teacher – if only we learn from it] In P., Ruohotie & J.,



Honka (Ed.), *Osaamisen kehittäminen organisaatiossa* (pp. 43-70). [Competence development in the organization] Seinäjoki: Consulting team.

Ruohotie, P. (1998). *Motivaatio, tahto ja oppiminen*. [Motivation, determination and learning] Helsinki: Oy Edita Ab.

Ruohomäki, V. (2015). Ihmisten johtaminen turbulenssissa. Eurooppalaista työ- ja organisaatiopsykologiaa. [People management in turbulence. European work and organizational psychology] *Psykologia*, 5(1), 388-391.

Salo, P., Nylund, J., & Stjernstrom, E. (2015). *On the practice architectures of instructional leadership*. Turku: Åbo Akademi.

Schwartz, S. H. (2011). Kulttuuriset arvo-orientaatiot. Kansallisten erojen luonne ja seuraukset. [Cultural Value Orientations: Nature & Implications of National Differences] Espoo: Limor kustannus.

Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish. A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York, NY: ATRIA.

Seligman, M. E. P., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000). Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 5-14.

Seppälä, P. (2014). Työn imu: psykometrinen, psykososiaalinen ja psykofysiologisen näkökulma. [Work engagement : psychometric , psycho-social and psychophysiological point of view] *Psykologia* 49(3), 224-229.

Silverman, D. (2005). *Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook*. London: Sage Publications.

Stairs, M., & Galpin, M. (2013). Positive engagement: from employee engagement to workplace happiness. In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work* (pp. 155-174). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Steger, M. F., & Dik, B. J. (2013). Work as meaning: Individual and organizational benefits of engaging in meaningful work. In P. A. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of positive Psychology and Work* (pp. 131-142). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Urduan, T., & Turner, J. C. (2005). Competence motivation in the classroom. In A. J. Elliot & C. S. Dweck (Eds.), *Handbook of Competence and Motivation* (pp. 297-317). New York, NY & London: The Guilford Press.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2003). *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research*. Thousands Oaks, California, CA: Sage Publications.

Thomas, G. (2011). *Case study. A guide for students & researches*. London: Sage Publications.

Tuomi, J., & Sarajärvi, A. (2009). *Laadullinen tutkimus ja sisällönanalyysi*. [Qualitative research and content analysis] Helsinki: Tammi.

Turner, N., Barling, J., & Zacharatos, A. (2002). Positive psychology at work. In C. R., Snyderand & S. J. Lopez (Eds.) *Handbook of positive psychology* (pp. 715-728). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Twenge, J. M., & Campbell, S. M. (2013). Generation Me and the Changing World of Work. In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work* (pp. 25-35). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Uusiautti, S. (2008). *"Tänään teen elämäni parhaan työn"* Työmenestys Vuoden työntekijöiden kokemana. ["Today, I'll work better than ever. Employees of the year describe their experiences of success at work]. Rovaniemi: Lapin yliopisto.

Uusiautti, S. (2013). On the positive connection between success and happiness. *International Journal of Research Studies in Psychology*, 3(1), 1-11.

Uusiautti, S. (2015). *Menestyvä ja hyvinvoiva yritys positiivisen psykologian varjossa*. [Successful and thriving enterprise in the light of positive psychology. Leaders' and employees' perceptions of success]. Helsinki: Books on Demand.

Uusiautti, S., & Määttä, K. (2013). Does success at work produce well-being and happiness or vice versa? *The International Journal of Interdisciplinary Organizational Studies*, 7(3), 11-25.

Uusiautti, S., & Määttä, K. (2015). *The Psychology of Becoming a Successful Worker. Research on the changing nature of achievement at work*. London and New York, NY: Routledge.

Viitala, R. (2005). *Johda osaamista! Osaamisen johtaminen teoriasta käytäntöön*. [Lead your skills! Knowledge management from theory to practice]. Helsinki: Informiestintä.

Wallin, A., Helenius, J., Saaranen-Kauppinen, A., & Eskola, J. (2015). Eläytymismenetelmän ensimmäiset kolme vuosikymmentä: menetelmällisestä erikoisuudesta vakiintuneeksi tutkimusmetodiksi. [The first three decades of empathy based method: from special method to institutionalized research method]. *Kasvatus* 46(3), 247–259.

Warren, S. (2013). What's wrong with being positive? In P. L. Linley, S. Harrington, & N. Garcea (Eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology and Work* (pp. 313-322). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative Research Interviewing. Biographic Narrative and Semi-Structured Methods*. London: Sage Journals.

World Health Organization. (2016). *Mental health: a state of well-being*. Retrieved from [http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental\\_health/en/](http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/)

Yerkes, R. M. & Dodson, J. M. (1908). The relation of strength of stimulus to rapidity of habit-formation. *Journal of Comparative Neurology and Psychology*, 18, 459-482. <http://psychclassics.yorku.ca/Yerkes/Law/>

## **Appendices**

### **Annex 1A**

#### Frame Story

Imagine that Madeleine/Mike is working in Nokia as a delivery capability manager in Global Operations organization. She/he has been working in company for eight years. She/he has been successful on her/his excellent performance and she/he is part of the GOPS High-Potential Program.

Write a short story of Madeleine's/Mike's career history in Nokia. Focus on describing the reasons lead to the situation why Madeleine/Mike has been appointed to GOPS High-Potential Program.

**Annex 1B**  
Frame Story

Imagine that Madeleine/Mike is working in Nokia as a delivery capability manager in Global Operations organization. She/he has been working in company for eight years. She/he has challenges to accomplish her/his work and she/he is not able to manage her/his responsibilities as expected.

Write a short story of Madeleine's/Mike's career history in Nokia. Focus on describing the reasons lead to the situation why Madeleine/Mike has challenges to manage her/his responsibilities.

**Annex 2**

Dear GOPS High-potential,

I'm Salla Karima, working in GOPS SCM Competence Development. In parallel with my work, I'm studying Education in Finland (University of Lapland).

Currently I'm doing my thesis work in co-operation with Nokia and the aim of my thesis is to find out what it requires to be capable to succeed at work.

I have defined you, GOPS High-potentials, as my target group for my thesis work. I would like to mention that this is optional for you to participate but would highly appreciate your co-operation and participation to data collection.

Borbala Molnar is the supervising contact of my thesis work in Nokia.

The aim of this call is to introduce you what I'd require from you as a target group. Agenda is following:

**Agenda:**

- 1. Introduce the aim of my thesis work**
- 2. Go through the questionnaire which is used for the data collection**

If you have any questions or comments before the call, please be in contact.

I'd like to thank you for your support already beforehand.

Best regards,

Salla Karima

### Annex 3

E-mail to High Potentials incl. request to write a frame story including guidance

Dear High Potential,

I'm Salla Karima, working in GOPS SCM Competence Development. In parallel with my work, I'm studying Education in Finland (University of Lapland) and currently doing my thesis work in co-operation with Nokia.

### Aim of my thesis work

Aim of my thesis work is to find out what it requires to be capable to succeed at work. Research also targets to understand possible obstacles and personal factors hindering employee's success at work and I'm focusing on the viewpoints of our GOPS High-potentials, as you, have. **Therefore, I am contacting you as I'm interest to understand your thoughts and experiences on the topic. Your experiences and viewpoints are invaluable and especially important in this study.**

### What I ask from you?

- This e-mail is related to **data collection** and therefore, as mentioned, I'm contacting you.
- Attached you can find an e-mail asking your **background information (1.)** and **a frame story (2.)** for which I'd ask you **to reply**. Reason why I'm asking your background information is that there might be or might not be differences on the thoughts and viewpoints depending on gender, age, education, country/region, and service year. This is valuable information when analyzing the results and making conclusions. You can also reply without filling background information (1.) leave that part out and reply only to frame story.
- Kindly read through the frame story and **continue the story (2.) in writing** in a way you prefer. Length of your text is not limited.

Your reply will be handled anonymously and will not be used in any other purposes than for my thesis work.

- I would appreciate your willingness to participate in this study and I hope that you will be able to use ~30minutes to prepare your reply. I would appreciate your replies either:
  - o by e-mail: to [salla.karima@nokia.com](mailto:salla.karima@nokia.com) or
  - o by post: Salla Karima, Karakaari 7A, 02610 Espoo, Finland **by 19.2.2016**

If you do not wish to participate in this study, that is also perfectly acceptable. I would like to ensure you that all data will be handled confidentially and will not be shared further as such. If you would like to know more of my study or if you have any questions or comments, kindly be in contact. Also if you feel that instructions above were not clear enough, please send me an e-mail, chat or call me.

I would like to thank you for your support already beforehand. Once I've finalized my thesis work, I'll of course share the final version with survey findings with you in a separate call and results are also shared in GOPS Talent Network Community.

Looking forward to your reply.

Best Regards,

Salla Karima



~~Work success:~~  
~~thesis / frame st...~~



~~Work success:~~  
~~thesis / frame st...~~

\*\*\*\*\*

Frame story A:

**1. Background information:**

Gender:

Age:

Education:

Working years in Nokia:

Country:

**2. Frame story:**



Imagine that Madeleine/Mike is working in Nokia as a delivery capability manager in Global Operations organization. She/he has been working in company for eight years. She/he has challenges to accomplish her/his work and she/he is not able to manage her/his responsibilities as expected.

Write a short story of Madeleine's/Mike's career history in Nokia. Focus on describing the reasons lead to the situation why Madeleine/Mike has challenges to manage her/his responsibilities.

*Continue your story in here....*

Frame story B:

**1. Background information:**

Gender:

Age:

Education:

Working years in Nokia:

Country:

\*\*\*\*\*

**2. Frame story:**

Imagine that Madeleine/Mike is working in Nokia as a delivery capability manager in Global Operations organization. She/he has been working in company for eight years. She/he has been successful on her/his excellent performance and she/he is part of the GOPS High-Potential Program.

Write a short story of Madeleine's/Mike's career history in Nokia. Focus on describing the reasons lead to the situation why Madeleine/Mike has been appointed to GOPS High-Potential Program.

*Continue your story in here...*

## Annex 4

### Interview request

Dear *(Name)*,

I'm Salla Karima, working in GOPS GSCM Competence Development. In parallel with my work, I'm studying Education in Finland (University of Lapland) and currently doing my Master's thesis in co-operation with Nokia.

The aim of my research is to investigate what it requires to be capable to succeed at work. Research also targets to understand possible obstacles and personal factors hindering employee's success at work.

The data will be collected in two phases. The first phase was conducted on February when I collected data through written frame stories. Now on my second phase, I will interview successful employees and **therefore, I'm contacting you. According to my understanding, you represent a successful employee and I'm interest to hear about your thoughts and experiences on the topic. Your experiences and viewpoints are valuable and especially important in this study.**

I would be interested to interview you personally. In our interview, we would discuss casually about different themes related to success at work. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes to one hour and we can do it face to face or virtually via WebEx depending on your location.

Your participation is voluntary and all the data will be handled confidentially and anonymously, I am the only person who will work with the interview data.

I would be grateful if you would be willing to join this study and share your thoughts and experiences. Work success resonates all of us and to understand phenomena better, it could give us as individuals and Nokia, especially GOPS as an organization, viewpoints and ideas to be used to develop workplace and educate employees better to support our success.

I hope that you would accept my invite and contact me latest by Tuesday March 29. so we can schedule your interview. If you would like to know more of my study or if you have any questions or comments, kindly be in contact, and I will be happy to give further information and answer your questions. You can send me an e-mail, call or chat via Jabber. My contact information is at the end of this letter.

I would like to thank you for your support already beforehand. Once I've completed my thesis, I'll share the report with you in a separate call.

Looking forward to your reply.

Best regards,

Salla Karima

GOPS GSCM Competence Development & Communications

[salla.karima@nokia.com](mailto:salla.karima@nokia.com)

+ 358 50 486 1910

## **Annex 5**

### **Semi-structured interview template**

Interview:

Time of interview:

Date and place:

Interviewee:

Interviewer:

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **1) Introduction of study and interviewer:**

- own background
- background and purpose of the study, introduce 1<sup>st</sup> phase = frame story collection
- introduce how interviewees have been selected

#### **2) Warming up:**

- Interviewee background information: gender, age, education, working years in Nokia, current position and previous positions in Nokia (or elsewhere)

#### **3) General discussion about success at work:**

##### Prerequisites of and development leading to success at work

1. How would you describe a person who has succeed in his/her work?
2. What does work success mean to you and how do you know if you have succeeded in your work or you have gained success at work?
3. What workplace-related factors do you think supports an employee's success at work?
4. How would you describe a successful employee or a top employee?

5. In the first set of data in this study, the research participants described that workplace-bound factors like co-operation and networking with others plays an important role when succeeding in own work. Do you agree with this or do you have a different kind of experience? Why?
6. Also, they described that personal features like pro-activeness, persistence and willingness to go out from own comfort zone are key for success. Do you agree with this or do you have a different kind of experience? Why?

Obstacles and personal factors hindering an employee's success at work

1. How would you describe a person who has not succeed in his/her work?
2. What factors you think could be behind if employee is not succeeding in his/her work?
3. How would you describe an employee who does not succeed in her/his work?
4. In the first set of data in this study, the research participants described that workplace-bound factors like unclear role & responsibilities (=job description) could be a reason why employee is not succeeding in her/his work. Do you agree with this or do you have a different kind of experience? Why?
5. Also, they described that personal features like lack of pro-activeness and not taking an active role in own learning and development could prevent for success. Do you agree with this or do you have a different kind of experience? Why?
6. Lack of competences and resilience were also mentioned as odds reason's which might prevent success. Do you agree with this or do you have a different kind of experience? Why?